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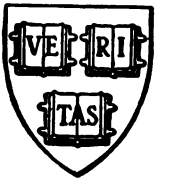

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A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

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PREFACE

SEVERAL dangers lie before the writer of an elementary history of literature. He may conceive his task too ambitiously, and in his zeal for thoroughness may lose that clearness and simplicity of plan which is indispensable in the first presentation of a large subject. He may, on the other hand, be tempted to simplify his matter artificially, and in so doing may fail to give the student any safe substructure upon which to build in later study. Again, in striving to be scientific, he may be only dry; or in a wholesome desire to be entertaining, he may be only gossipy or nebulous. The present volume, whether or not it avoids these dangers, has been prepared with full consciousness of them. An attempt has here been made to present the history of English literature from the earliest times to our own day, in a historical scheme simple enough to be apprehended by young students, yet accurate and substantial enough to serve as a permanent basis for study, however far the subject is pursued. But within the limits of this formal scheme, the fact has been held constantly in mind that literature, being the vital and fluid thing it is, must be taught, if at all, more by suggestion, and by stimulation of the student's own instinctive mental life, than by dogmatic assertion. More than any other branch of study, literature demands on the part of the teacher an attitude of respect toward the intelligence of the student; and if at any point the authors of this book may seem to have

taken too much alertness of mind for granted, their defence must be that only by challenge and invitation can any permanent result in the way of intellectual growth be accomplished. The historian of English literature deals with the most fascinating of stories, the story of the imaginative career of a gifted race; he is in duty bound not to cheapen or to dull his theme, but, so far as in him lies, to give those whom he addresses a realizing sense of the magnitude of our common heritage in letters. To do this, he must work in the literary spirit, and with freedom of appeal to all the latent capabilities of his reader's mind.

The proportions of this book have been carefully considered. A full half of the space has been given to the last two centuries, and much more to the nineteenth century than to the eighteenth. These and other apportionments of space have been made, not on absolute grounds, but with the design of throwing into prominence what is most important for a student to learn upon his first approach to the subject. The chief figures in each era have been set in relief, and the minor figures have been grouped about them, in an endeavor thus to suggest their relative significance. A full working bibliography, including texts, biography, and criticism, has been added, in the hope that it may be of assistance not only in the current work of the classroom, but also as a guide for later study.

The thanks of the authors are due to Professor F. N. Robinson, of Harvard University, for his kindness in criticising the contents of the early chapters.

W. V. M.
R. M. L.

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A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD

I

To find the beginnings of English literature we must go back to a time when the ancestors of the English people lived on the continent of Europe, and spoke a tongue which, though related in its roots to modern English, is unintelligible to us without special study. Anglo-Saxon, or Old English, belongs to the low-German family of languages, of which Dutch is the best modern representative; and the men who spoke it lived, when history first discovers them, along the German ocean from the mouth of the Rhine to the peninsula of Jutland. They were divided into three principal branches: the Saxons, dwelling near the mouth of the Elbe; the Angles, inhabiting the southwest part of Denmark; and the Jutes, extending north of the Angles into modern Jutland.

The Anglo-Saxon Tribes.

How extensive these tribes were, and how far into the interior their territories reached, we do not know. That portion of them which concerns us, dwelt along the sea; their early poetry gives glimpses of little tribal or family settlements, bounded on one side by wild moors and dense forests, where dwelt monstrous creatures of mist and darkness, and on the other

Their Home; War and Seafaring.

by the stormy northern ocean, filled likewise with shapes of shadowy fear. Whether from superstition or from the physical difficulty of the country, these shore tribes seem not to have cared to penetrate far inland. Their two passions, war and wandering, found satisfaction in the life of the sea. As soon as spring had unlocked the harbors, their boats would push out in search of booty and adventure: sometimes to wreak blood-feud on a neighboring tribe, sometimes to harry a monastery on the coasts of Roman Gaul, or to sail along the white cliffs of England, their future home. This sea-faring life, full of danger and change, was the fruitful source of early poetry. Whenever an Anglo-Saxon poet mentions the sea his lines kindle. Upon it he lavishes a wealth of imaginative epithet; it is the "swan-road," the "sealbath," the "path of the whales." And the ship is treated with equal enthusiasm; it is the "sea-steed," the "wave-house of warriors"; its keel is "wreathed with foam like the neck of a swan." The darker aspects of the sea are given with equal fervor. It is characteristic of the grim nature of the Anglo-Saxon that he should fill with terror and gloom the element which he most loved to inhabit.

Their Religion.

The poetry which has come down to us from this early period has been worked over by later hands and given a Christian coloring. But from other sources we know what were the primitive gods of the race: Tiu, a mysterious and dreadful deity of war; Woden, father of the later dynasty of gods, and patron of seers and travellers; Thor, the god of thunder; Frea, mother of the gods and giver of fruitfulness. These are commemorated in our names for the days of the week, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. The rites of Eostre, a mysterious goddess of the dawn, survive, though strangely altered, in the Christian festival of Easter. In studying the early poetry, we must put out of our minds, as far as we can, all those ideals of life and conduct which come from

Christianity, and remember that we have to do with men whose gods were only magnified images of their own wild natures: men who delighted in bloodshed and in plunder, and were much given to deep drinking in the mead-hall; but who nevertheless were sensitive to blame and praise, were full of rude chivalry and dignity, and were alert to the poetry of life, to its mystery and its pathos.

Our Anglo-Saxon ancestors had in an eminent degree also that passion which gives the first impulse to literature among a primitive people—love of glory. When the first recorded hero of the race, Beowulf, has met his death, and his followers are recalling his noble nature, they say as their last word that "he was of all world-kings the most desirous of praise." It was not enough for such men as he that they should spend their lives in glorious adventures; they desired to see their names and their deeds spread among distant peoples and handed down to unborn generations. Hence the poet, who alone could insure this fame, was held in high esteem. Two classes of singers were recognized, first the *gleeman* (*gleóman*), who did not create his own songs, but merely (like the Greek rhapsodist) chanted what he had learned from others; and second the *scôp*, the poet proper, who took the crude material of history and legend which lay about him, and shaped it into song. Sometimes the scôp was permanently attached to the court of an aetheling, or lord, was granted land and treasure, and was raised by virtue of his poet-craft to the same position of honor which the other followers of the aetheling held by virtue of their prowess in battle. Sometimes he wandered from court to court, depending for a hospitable reception upon the curiosity of his host concerning the stories he had to chant.

Their Singers.

Two very ancient bits of poetry, one of them probably the oldest in our literature, tell of the fortunes of the scôp. One of them deals with the wandering and the other with the stationary singer.

The first is the fragment known as "Widsith," or "The Far-wanderer." The poem opens,—"Widsith spake, unlocked his word hoard; he who many a tribe had met on earth, who had travelled through many a folk." Then follows a list of famous princes of the past, an enumeration of the various peoples and countries the bard has visited, and praises of those princes who have entertained him generously. He declares that he has been "with Cæsar, who had sway over the joyous cities," and even with the Israelites, the Egyptians, and the Indians. The poem ends with a general description of the wandering singer's life, touched at the close with the stoic melancholy which occurs so often in Anglo-Saxon poetry;—"Thus roving, with song-devices wander the gleemen through many lands. . . . Ever north or south they find one knowing in songs and liberal of gifts, who before his court will exalt his grandeur and show his earl-ship; until all departs, light and life together." This fragment has been held by some scholars to date, in part at least, from the fourth century. If so it is the oldest bit of verse in any modern language, and with it English literature "unlocks its word-hoard."

Widsith.

The second of these poems dealing with the fortunes of the Scôp is probably not nearly so old. It is called "Deor's Lament," and again the scôp himself speaks. His skill has been eclipsed by another singer, Heorrenda, and his lord has taken away from him his land-right and his place at court, in order to bestow them upon the successful rival. The poet comforts himself by recalling other misfortunes which men and women in past time have lived to overcome, and ends each rude strophe with the refrain, "That *he* endured, this also may I." The personal nature of the theme, the plaintive sadness of the tone, and above all the refrain, give the poem extraordinary interest. It has been called the first English lyric,—with justice, if we take both the word English and the word lyric in the broadest sense.

Deor's Lament.

But by far the most important work which remains to us from the pagan period of Anglo-Saxon poetry is the long poem entitled, from its hero, *Beowulf*. It is something over three thousand lines in length, and, though the manuscript is broken here and there, these breaks are not sufficient to mar the effect of artistic completeness. It perhaps existed at first in the form of short songs, which were sung among the Angles and Jutes, inhabiting what is now Denmark, and among the Goths, in southern Sweden. Probably as early as the sixth century these lays had begun to coalesce, but just when the poem took its present form we do not know.* The story of the poem is as follows:—

Beowulf.

Hrothgar, king of the West-Danes, has built for himself near the sea a great hall, named Heorot, where he may sit with his thanes at the mead-drinking, and listen to the chanting of the gleemen. For a while he lives in happiness, and is known far and wide as a splendid and liberal prince. But one night there comes from the wild march-land, the haunt of all unearthly and malign creatures, a terrible monster named Grendel. Entering the mead-hall he slays thirty of the sleeping Danes, and carries their corpses away to his lair. The next night the same thing is repeated. No mortal power seems able to cope with the gigantic foe. In the winter nights Grendel couches in the splendid hall, defiling all its bright ornaments. For twelve winters this scourge afflicts the West-Danes, until Hrothgar's spirit is broken.

Hrothgar and Grendel.

At last the story of Grendel's deeds crosses the sea to Gothland, where young Beowulf dwells at the court of his uncle, King Hygelac. He determines to go to Hrothgar's assistance. With fifteen companions he embarks. "Departed then over the wavy sea the foamy-necked floater,

* In all probability the development of *Beowulf* into a complete poem took place largely on English soil, and was completed by the end of the eighth century.

most like to a bird." At dawn of the second day the voyagers catch sight of the promontories of Hrothgar's land; and soon, from the top of the cliffs, they behold in the vale beneath them the famous hall, "rich and gold-variegated, most glorious of dwellings under the firmament." The young heroes in their "shining war byrnies,"* and with their spears like a "grey ashwood above their heads," are ushered into the hall "where Hrothgar sits, old and hairless, amid his band of earls." Beowulf craves permission to cleanse Heorot of its pest, and Hrothgar consents that the Goths shall abide Grendel's coming, in the hall that night. Meanwhile, until darkness draws on, the thanes of Hrothgar and the followers of Beowulf sit drinking mead, "the bright sweet liquor," and listening to the songs of the gleeman. The feast draws to a close when Wealtheow, Hrothgar's queen, after solemnly handing the mead-cup to her lord and to Beowulf, and bidding them "be blithe at the beer-drinking," goes through the hall distributing gifts among the thanes. The king, queen, and their followers then withdraw to another building for the night, while Beowulf and his men lie down, each with his armor hung on the nail above his head, to wait for the coming of Grendel. All fall asleep except Beowulf, who "awaits in angry mood the battle-meeting."

The Coming of Beowulf.

The coming of the monster is described with grewsome force. "Then came from the moors, under the misty hills, Grendel stalking. . . Straightway he rushed on the door, fast with fire-hardened bands. . . On the variegated floor the fiend trod; he went wroth of mood, from his eyes stood a horrid light like flame. . . He saw in the hall many warriors sleeping, a kindred band. . . Then his heart laughed." He seizes one of the warriors, bites his "bone-casings," drinks the blood from his veins, and greedily devours him even to the hands and feet. Next he makes for Beowulf, but the

The Fight in the Hall.

* Corselets of mail.

hero, who has in his hands the strength of thirty men, seizes the fiend with such a mighty hand-grip that he is terror-stricken and turns to flee. Beowulf keeps his grip, and a fearful struggle begins. The warriors, awakened by the combat and the "horrid lay sung by God's denier," try to bring help with their swords, but no mortal weapon can wound Grendel. At last the monster wrenches his own arm from its socket and flees to his lair to die, leaving Beowulf to nail the ghastly trophy in triumph above the door of Heorot.

In the morning there is great rejoicing. The king, with the queen and her company of maidens, come through the meadows to gaze in wonder on the huge arm and claw nailed beneath the gold roof of the hall. When the evening feast begins, Beowulf sits between the two sons of the king, and receives the precious gifts,—jewels, rings, and a golden necklace,—which the queen presents to him. But at night-fall, when the warriors have again lain down to sleep in the hall, Grendel's mother comes to take vengeance for her son. She seizes one of Hrothgar's nobles, Aeschere, and bears him away to her watery den.

Beowulf vows to seek the new foe at the bottom of her fen-pool, and there grapple with her. With Hrothgar and a band of followers he goes along the cliffs and windy promontories which bound the moor on the seaward side, until he comes to Grendel's lair. It is a sea-pool, shut in by precipitous rocks, and overhung by the shaggy trunks and aged writhen boughs of a "joyless wood." Trembling passers-by have seen fire fleeting on the waves at night, and the hart wearied by the hounds will lie down and die on these banks rather than plunge into the unholy waters. The pool is so deep that it is a day's space before Beowulf reaches the bottom. Snakes and beasts of the shining deep make war on him as he descends. At last he finds himself in a submarine cave where the "mere-wife" is lurking, and a ghastly struggle begins.

The Fight beneath the Sea.

Once the giantess throws Beowulf to the ground, and sitting astride his body draws out her broad short knife to despatch him; but with a superhuman effort he struggles up again, throws away his broken sword and seizes from a heap of arms a magic blade, forged by giants of old time; with it he hews off the head of Grendel's mother, and then that of Grendel, whose dead body he finds lying in the cave. So poisonous is the blood of Grendel that it melts the metal of the blade, leaving only the curved hilt in Beowulf's hand. When he reappears with his trophies at the surface of the water, all have given him up for dead. Great is the jubilation when the hero appears with his thanes, and throws upon the floor of the mead-hall the two gigantic heads, which four men apiece can hardly carry.

Beowulf and the Fire-dragon.

The second great episode of the poem is Beowulf's fight with the Dragon of the Gold-hoard. Beowulf has been reigning as king for fifty years and is now an old man, when calamity comes upon him and his people in the shape of a monster of the serpent-kind, which flies by night enveloped in fire; and which, in revenge for the theft of a gold cup from its precious hoard, burns the king's hall. Old as he is, Beowulf fights the dragon single-handed. He slays the monster in its lair, but himself receives his mortal hurt.

Death of Beowulf.

The death of the old king is picturesque and touching. He bids his thane bring out from the dragon's den "the gold-treasure, the jewels, the curious gems," in order that death may be softer to him, seeing the wealth he has gained for his people. Wiglaf, entering the cave of the "old twilight-flier," sees "dishes standing, vessels of men of yore, footless, their ornaments fallen away; there was many a helm old and rusty, and many armlets cunningly fastened," and over the hoard droops a magic banner, "all golden, locked by arts of song," from which a light is shed over the treasure. Beowulf gazes with dying eyes upon the precious things; then he asks

that his thanes build for him a funeral barrow on a promontory of the sea, which the sailors, as they "drive their foaming barks from afar over the mists of floods, may see and name Beowulf's Mount."

Besides Beowulf, and the short poems *Widsith* and *Deor's Lament*, mentioned above, two other pieces remain to us from the pagan period of Anglo-Saxon poetry.* They are both fragments. One, the *Fight at Finnsburg*, full of savage vigor, throws light upon an obscure story referred to in *Beowulf;* the other, *Waldhere*, is connected with the old German cycle of poems which were brought together many centuries later as the *Niebelungen Lied*.

Summary of Early Poetry.

When we look at this early literature as a whole we cannot fail to be struck by its grimness. It has, to be sure, genial moments, moments even of tenderness, but for the most part the darker aspects of nature, storm and hail and mist, the wintry terror of the sea, are what the poet loves to dwell upon; and over the fierce martial life which he depicts there hangs a cloud of grim fatalism, the shadow of Wyrd, or Fate, huge and inescapable. The great business of life is war; from it proceeds all honor and dignity. To be faithful and liberal to his friends and deadly to his foes, that is the whole duty of a man. But a time was at hand when these fierce worshippers of Thor and Woden were to hear a new gospel. Sweeping southwestward in their viking ships, they were to conquer a new home for themselves in Britain; and there to be themselves conquered, not by arms, but by bands of eager monks who came from the seat of the Church in Rome and from Christianized Ireland, preaching peace and goodwill.

* It must be remembered that Beowulf is tinged with Christian coloring, given to it, no doubt, by the English monks who transcribed the manuscript. Still, in general tone it is pagan, and in origin continental.

II.

WHILE the literature we have just described was beginning to take form in the motherland of the Anglo-Saxon people, their future island-home was being made into a province of the Roman Empire. The very earliest inhabitants of Britain, that mysterious race which may have raised the huge circle of monoliths at Stonehenge, had given way—how early we do not know—to a Celtic-speaking people. Before the Roman conquest this people spread over France, Spain, and all the British islands. The Celts were of an impetuous character, imaginative, curious, and quick to learn. The Roman historians tell us of their eagerness for news, of their delight in clever speech and quick retort. Their early literature shows a delicate fancy, a kind of wild grace and a love of beauty for its own sake, strikingly in contrast with the stern poetry of the Anglo-Saxon scôp. But this very quickness of sympathy and of intelligence proved fatal to their national existence. When the Roman legions crossed from Gaul there was a short space of fierce resistance, and then the Celts accepted, from curiosity as much as from compulsion, the imposing Roman civilization. Some of the more stubborn fled to the fastnesses of Wales and Scotland, and there continued even to our own day their Celtic traditions; but the greater part seem to have submitted to the Roman, as if by a kind of fascination, even giving up their language to learn that of their conquerors. The Romans, like the English of our own day, carried wherever they went their splendid but somewhat rigid civilization, and by the end of the fourth century England was dotted with towns and villas where, amid pillared porticoes, mosaic pavements, marble baths, forums and hippodromes, a Roman emperor could find himself at home.

England before the Anglo-Saxon Invasions.

This was the state of England when there began that remarkable series of movements on the part of the wild

Germanic tribes, which we know as the "migration." About the end of the fourth century, urged by a common impulse, tribe after tribe swept southward; some by sea, to harry the coasts of Gaul and Britain, some over the Alps and the Pyrenees, to batter at the gates of Rome, to plunder the rich islands of the Mediterranean, and to found a kingdom in Africa. The Roman legions were recalled from Britain to guard the imperial city, and the Celtic inhabitants, weakened by three centuries of civilized life, were left to struggle unaided against the pirate bands of Jutes, Saxons, and Angles, which appeared every spring in increasing numbers upon their coast. The Celts did not yield to these savage invaders so readily as they had done to the polished Romans. From the time when the first band of Jutes landed on the isle of Thanet to the time when the invaders had subjugated the island and set up the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, a century and a half elapsed, during which all the monuments which Rome had left were ruined if not obliterated. During these years of struggle there began to grow up, about the person of an obscure Celtic leader, that cycle of stories which was to prove so fruitful of poetry both in France and England, —the legends of Arthur, founder of the Round Table, and defender of the western Britons against the weakening power of Rome and the growing fury of the barbarians. Many Celts fled, as in the times of the Roman invasion, into Wales and Scotland; many were killed; but a great number were undoubtedly absorbed by the invading race. They communicated to that race its first leaven; they made it more sensitive and receptive, and gave it a touch of extravagance and gayety, which, after being reinforced by similar elements in the temperament of the Norman-French invaders, was to blossom in the sweet humor of Chaucer, in the rich fancy of Spenser, and in the broad humanity of Shakespeare. But this effect was not to be manifest for a long time to come. The literature which arose

The Anglo-Saxon Invasions.

in England after the Saxon conquest, shows little trace of it. The immediate influence was a religious one, and the poetry we shall now consider is nearly all deeply colored with religious thought and feeling.

The Christian teaching came into England in two different streams, one from Rome, one from Ireland, which country had been won from heathenism several centuries before. The first stream began late in the sixth century, with the coming of Augustine. Little by little, after the advent of this great missionary among the Saxons in the south of England, the new creed drove out the old, winning its way by virtue of its greater ideality, and the authority with which it spoke of man's existence beyond the grave. This stream of religious influence which came from Rome, centred chiefly in south and central England, in the kingdom of Wessex. It produced some schools of learning, but almost no literature. It is to the north and east, to the kingdom of Northumbria, which felt the influence of the Irish monks, that we must look for the first blossomings of Christian poetry in England.

The Christianizing of England.

Of all the monasteries which sprang up in Northumbria, in the train of the Celtic missionaries from Ireland, two are most famous because of their connection with literature—Jarrow and Whitby. At Jarrow lived and died Baeda, known as the "Venerable Bede," a gentle, laborious scholar in whom all the learning of Northumbria was summed up. He wrote many books, nearly all in Latin, the most notable being the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum). It is from a passage in this book that we know the story of Caedmon, a cowherd of Whitby, the first poet of Christian England. Bede tells us that when the inmates of the monastery were gathered together at the evening feast, and the harp was passed round for each to sing in turn, Caedmon would rise

Bede.

Caedmon.

and depart, for he was an unlettered man and knew nothing of the gleeman's art. So it was for many years, until he was no longer young. One night, when he had thus left the cheerful company and gone to the stables to tend the cattle, he fell asleep and had a wonderful dream. The shining figure of the Lord appeared before him, saying, "Caedmon, sing to me." Caedmon answered, "Behold, I know not how to sing, and therefore I left the feast tonight." "Still, sing now to me," the Lord said. "What then shall I sing?" asked Caedmon. "Sing the beginning of created things," was the answer. Then in his dream Caedmon framed some verses of the Creation, which in the morning he wrote down, adding others to them. News of the wonderful gift which had been vouchsafed to the unschooled man was carried to Hild, the abbess of the foundation, and she commanded portions of the Scripture to be read to him, that he might paraphrase them into verse. So it was done; and from this time on Caedmon's life was given to his heaven-appointed task of turning the Old Testament narrative into song.

The poems which have come down to us under Caedmon's name* consist of paraphrases of Genesis, of Exodus, and a part of Daniel. An interesting fragment called *Judith* is sometimes included in the work of the "school of Caedmon." In places, especially in dealing with a warlike episode, the poet expands his matter freely, stamping it with the impress of his own mind. In *Exodus*, for instance, all the interest is centred on the overwhelming of Pharaoh's host in the Red Sea. The Egyptian and the Israelitish armies are described with a heathen scôp's delight in the pomp and circumstance of war, and the disaster which overtakes the Egyptian hosts is sung with savage force and zest. In *Judith* the pagan delight in battle and in blood-revenge is even more marked. First, king Holo-

* The pieces traditionally ascribed to Caedmon are for the most part not accepted by modern scholarship as his work.

fernes is shown, like a rude viking, boisterous and wassailing in his mead-hall. When Judith comes to him in his drunken sleep and hews off his head with a sword, the poet cannot restrain his exultation; and the flight of the army of Holofernes before the men of Israel is described with grewsome vividness.

Cynewulf.

If we know little of Caedmon's life, we know still less of Cynewulf, the poet who succeeded him, and who was probably the greatest of the Anglo-Saxon poets, if we except the unknown bard who gave Beowulf its present form. Out of very insubstantial materials a picturesque story has been made for him. He is said to have been in his youth a wandering singer, leading a wild life by sea and shore, as he plied his gleeman's craft, now in the halls of aethelings, now in the huts of shepherds and on the village green, now on the deck of Northumbrian coasting-ships. In the midst of this free existence he suddenly underwent some deep religious experience, which, together with the public disasters then overtaking Northumbria, completely changed the temper of his mind. He gave up the half-pagan nature-poetry which up to this time he had written, and turned to write religious poems. We have, signed with his name in runes, two lives of saints, and an epic dealing with Christ's incarnation and ascension, and with the Day of Judgment. Other poems have been ascribed to him with varying degrees of probability: *Andreas*, a very lively and naïve story of a saint's martyrdom and final triumph over his enemies; the *Phœnix*, a richly colored description of the mythic bird and its dwelling-place, with a religious interpretation; and finally a number of *Riddles*, very curious compositions, some of which are full of fine imagination and fresh observation of nature.

These last are nothing more nor less than conundrums, in which some object or phenomenon is described suggestively, and the reader is left to guess the meaning. In the

hands of a mere versifier this would be the dreariest of forms, but Cynewulf (or whoever is indeed the author) not seldom enters with so much sympathy and dramatic imagination into the life of the thing described, that he lifts the subject into poetry. The new moon is a young viking, sailing through the skies in his pirate ship, laden with spoils of battle, to build a burg for himself in highest Heaven; but the sun, a greater warrior, drives him away and seizes his land, until the night conquers the sun in turn. The iceberg shouts and laughs as it plunges through the wintry sea, eager to crush the fleet of hostile ships. The sword in its scabbard is a mailed fighter, who goes exultingly into the battle-play, and then is sad because women upbraid him for the slaughter he has done. The swan and the beaver are described with an insight and sympathy which reminds us, in a far-off way, of Wordsworth and the modern nature-poets. Altogether these riddles are remarkable compositions, and it is pleasant, even if not quite scientific, to think of them as the youthful work of Cynewulf, since his is the only poet's name that has survived from those obscure and troubled times.

The Riddles.

The *Phœnix** derives a special interest from the fact that it is the only Anglo-Saxon poem of any length which shows a delight in the soft and radiant moods of Nature, as opposed to her fierce and grim aspects. In the land where the Phœnix dwells "the groves are all behung with blossoms . . . the boughs upon the trees are ever laden, the fruit is aye renewed through all eternity."† The music of the wonderful bird, as it goes aloft "to meet that gladsome gem, God's candle," is "sweeter and more beauteous than any craft of song."

The Phœnix.

* The Phœnix and many of the Riddles are based upon Latin originals.

† The quotations from the Phœnix are from Gollancz's translation, Exeter Book, Early English Text Society's publications, 1895.

When the thousand years of its life are done, it flies far away to a lonely Syrian wood, builds its own holocaust of fragrant herbs, which the Sun kindles. Out of the ball of ashes a new Phoenix is born, "richly dight with plumage, as it was at first, radiantly adorned," and flies back to its home in the enchanted land of summer. At the end, the whole poem is made into a Christian allegory of the death and resurrection of Christ, and of his ascent to heaven amid the ministering company of saints. The poem has a fervor and enthusiasm lacking to the Latin original, and whether we may or may not ascribe it to Cynewulf, it is the work of a good poet. Scholars have pointed out that the description of the bird's dwelling-place is influenced by the old Celtic fancy of the Land of Eternal Youth; and certainly it is not difficult to see, in the bright colors and happy fancy of the poem, the working of the Celtic imagination, as well as the transforming touch of hope which had been brought into men's lives by Christianity.

Besides the poetry attributed to Caedmon and his school, and to Cynewulf and his school, there exist a few short poems, lyrics, or "dramatic lyrics," of the greatest interest. One of these, called "The Wife's Lament," gives us a glimpse of one of the harsh customs of our ancestors. A wife, accused of faithlessness, has been banished from her native village, and compelled to live alone in the forest; from her place of exile she pours out a moan to the husband who has been estranged from her by false slanderers. "The Lover's Message" is a kind of companion piece to this. The speaker in the little poem is the tablet of wood upon which an absent lover has carved a message to send to his beloved. It tells her that he has now a home for her in the south, and bids her, as soon as she hears the cuckoo chanting of his sorrow in the copsewood, to take sail over the ocean pathway to her lord, who waits and longs for her. With these two little poems begins the love-poetry of England.

Short Poems of Sentiment.

The longest and most perfect in form of these half-lyrical elegies or poems of sentiment, is "The Wanderer." It is the complaint of one who must "traverse the watery ways, stir with his hands the rime-cold sea, and tread the paths of exile," while he muses upon the joys and glories of a life that has passed away forever. "Often," he says, "it seems to him in fancy as though he clasps and kisses his great lord, and on his knees lays hand and head, even as erewhile;" but he soon wakes friendless, and sees before him only "the fallow ways, sea-birds bathing and spreading their wings, falling hoar-frost and snow mingled with hail." Rapt away again by his longing, he beholds his friends and kinsmen hovering before him in the air; he "greets them with snatches of song, he scans them eagerly, comrades of heroes; soon they swim away again; the sailor-souls do not bring hither many old familiar songs."* And at the close the Wanderer breaks out into a song of lamentation over the departed glories of a better time: "Where is gone the horse? Where is gone the hero? Where is gone the giver of treasure? Where are gone the seats of the feast? Where are the joys of the hall? Ah, thou bright cup! Ah, thou mailed warrior! Ah, the prince's pride! how has the time passed away . . as if it had not been!" There is a wistful tenderness and a lyric grace in this poem which suggests once more the Celtic leaven at work in the ruder Anglo-Saxon genius. It suggests, too, a state of society fallen into ruin, a time of decadence and disaster. Probably, before it was written, such a time had come for England, and especially for Northumbria.

The Danish Invasions.

While the Anglo-Saxons had been settling down in England to a life of agriculture, their kinsmen who remained on the Continent had continued to lead their wild free-booting life of the sea. Toward the end of the eighth century bands of Danes began to harass the English coasts. Northumbria bore the main

* Gollancz's translation of Exeter Book.

force of their attacks. The very monastery of Jarrow, in which Baeda had written his Ecclesiastical History, was plundered, and its inhabitants put to the sword. The monastery of Whitby, where Caedmon had had his vision, was only temporarily saved by the fierce resistance of the monks. By the middle of the ninth century the Danes had made themselves masters of Northumbria. They were such men as the Angles, Jutes, and Saxons had been three hundred years before—worshippers of the old gods, ruthless uprooters of a religion, literature, and society which they did not understand. In Wessex, the heroism of King Alfred turned back the tide of barbarian invasion; and from this time until the Norman conquest, two centuries later, the only literature which remains to us was produced in Wessex. It is almost entirely a literature of prose; the best of it was the work of King Alfred himself, or produced under his immediate encouragement.

King Alfred.

As a child King Alfred had seen Rome, and had lived for a time at the great court of Charles the Bald in France; and the spectacle of these older and richer civilizations had filled him with a desire to give to his rude subjects something of the heritage of the past. When, after a desperate struggle, he had won peace from the Danes, he called about him learned monks from the sheltered monasteries of Ireland and Wales, and made welcome at his court all strangers who could bring him a manuscript or sing to him an old song. It was probably during his reign that the poems of Caedmon and Cynewulf, as well as the older pagan poems, were brought southward out of Northumbria and put in the West-Saxon form in which we now have them. He spurred on his priests and bishops to write. He himself learned a little Latin, in order that he might translate certain books which he deemed would be most useful and interesting to Englishmen, into the West-Saxon tongue; putting down the sense, he says, "sometimes word for word, sometimes meaning for

meaning, as I had learned it from Plegmund, my archbishop, and Asser, my bishop, and Grimbald, my mass-priest, and John, my mass-priest." He selected for translation a philosophical work, the *Consolations of Philosophy* of Boethius; a manual of history and geography by Orosius; and a religious treatise, the *Pastoral Care* or "Shepherd's Book" of Gregory, copies of which he sent to all his bishops in order that they might learn to be better shepherds of their flocks. More important still, he translated Baeda's Ecclesiastical History, thus giving a native English dress to the first great piece of historical writing which had been done in England. Lastly, he caused the dry entries of the deaths of kings and the installations of bishops, which the monks were in the habit of making on the Easter rolls, to be expanded into a clear and picturesque narrative, the greatest space, of course, being taken up with the events of his own reign. This, known as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, is the oldest monument of English prose,* and is, with one exception, the most venerable piece of extended prose writing in Europe.

Despite all his efforts, however, King Alfred did not succeed in creating anything like a vital native literature in Wessex. The language was changing, and the literary spirit of the people was almost dead. The sermons or *Homilies* of the great and devoted Aelfric, however, here and there rise to the rank of literature, by reason of the naïve picturesqueness of some religious legend which they treat, or by the fervor of their piety. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, also, which continued to grow in the monasteries of Peterborough, Winchester, and Ely, here and there breaks out into stirring verse. One of these poetic episodes is known as the *Battle of Brunanburh*, and is entered under the year 937.

Decadence of Anglo-Saxon Literature.

* Here, and earlier in this chapter, the word English is used loosely, to cover the productions of the Anglo-Saxon period. Strictly speaking, English literature did not begin until a century and a half after the Norman conquest.

Another, the *Death of Byrhtnoth,* also called the *Battle of Maldon,* bears date 991; it is the swan-song of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

The truth is that England at the end of the tenth century was in need of new blood. The Anglo-Saxon genius, with all its rugged grandeur and fine persistence, was lacking in many elements necessary to make a great national life; and Anglo-Saxon poetry, looked at in the large, betrays a narrowness of theme and monotony of tone, out of which a great literature could have evolved, if at all, only slowly and with difficulty. Some new graft was needed, to give elasticity, gayety, and range; and this need was met when, in 1066, William the Conqueror landed at Hastings with his army of Norman-French knights, and marched to give battle to the forces of Harold, the last of the Saxon kings.

CHAPTER II

THE NORMAN-FRENCH PERIOD

THE Normans, or North-men, were an extraordinary people. A century and a half before their invasion of England, they had appeared off the coast of France; and under their leader, Hrolf the Ganger (the "Walker"), they had pushed up the Seine in their black boats, wasting and burning to the very gates of Paris. The French won peace by giving over to them broad and rich lands in the northwest, known henceforth as Normandy. Unlike the other northern peoples, they showed a marvellous power of assimilating the southern civilization. They married with the French women, adopted French manners and the French tongue. In a little over a century they had grown from a barbarous horde of sea-robbers into the most polished and brilliant people of Europe, whose power was felt in the Mediterranean and the far East. They united in a singular manner impetuous daring and cool practical sense. Without losing anything of their northern bravery in war, they managed to gather up all the southern suppleness and wit, all the southern love of splendor and art. When William advanced to meet King Harold at Hastings, a court minstrel, Taillefer, rode before the invading army, tossing up his sword and catching it like a juggler, while he chanted the Song of Roland. He is a symbol of the Norman spirit, of its dash, its buoyancy, its imaginative brilliancy. The Normans brought with them to England not only the terror of the sword and the strong hand of conquest, but also the vitalizing breath of song, the fresh and youthful spirit of romance.

The Normans.

No one among the conquered people, however, could then have foreseen that the invasion was to prove the greatest of national blessings; for the sternness and energy with which the Norman king and his nobles set about planting their own civilization in the island, brought with it much oppression and hardship. Over the length and breadth of England rose those strong castles whose gray and massive walls still frown over the pleasant English landscape. Less forbidding than these, but no less suggestive of the foreigner, splendid minsters gradually took the place of the gloomy little Saxon churches. Forest laws of terrible harshness preserved the "tall deer" which the king "loved as his life;" but when a man was found murdered, if it could be proved that he was a Saxon, no further notice was taken of the crime. The Saxon language, or "Englisc," as it had begun to be called in King Alfred's time, was the badge of serfdom; and not only in the court and camp and castle, but also in Parliament and on the justice-bench, French alone was spoken. With the one exception of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which was still continued, English "dives underground" in 1066, and does not reappear for a century and a half. If a prophet had arisen to tell the Norman nobility of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, that not French, but English, was destined to be the speech of their descendants, he would have been laughed at. But this incredible thing was to be, because of the dogged persistency of the Anglo-Saxon nature in clinging to its own. Though no longer written, the old tongue lived on the lips of the subjugated race, from father to son. About 1200 it began to be used again as a language of books, disputing with rude and uncertain accents a place by the side of the polished language of the conquerors. When it reappeared, however, it was a changed tongue. It was no longer Anglo-Saxon, but English. In spite of many words now obsolete, many strange forms and spellings, the English of the early thirteenth

Effects of the Norman Invasion.

century is indubitably the same language which we speak to-day. It had sloughed off its inflections, simplified its grammar, and required only to be enriched by French elements, and made flexible by use, to be ready for the hand of Chaucer.

The Making of English.

But to say that English was "enriched by French elements" is hardly to convey an idea of the extent to which the foreign tongue entered into the composition of the language. What really happened was that English absorbed nearly the whole body of the French speech, or rather that the two languages gradually melted together and became one. The Saxon, however, continued as the marrow and bony structure of the whole. The words of French origin in our vocabulary outnumber the Saxon words three to one; but in ordinary speech, where only the common words of daily life and action are used, the Saxon words are greatly in preponderance. The result of this fusion was to increase enormously the power of the language to express thought and feeling. It has made English the most splendid poetic language of the world, with the possible exception of the Greek alone. The fusion was accomplished in a period of about a century and a half. When English first appeared, in 1200, after its long sleep, it contained almost no French ingredients; by the middle of the fourteenth century the process of blending the two tongues was beginning to draw to a close. Chaucer, the poet who was to complete it and fix the language in much the shape that it wears to-day, was then a boy in the streets of London.

The Metrical Romances.

The literature of this century and a half of preparation is of deep interest from the historical point of view, and has not a little intrinsic charm. A large proportion of it consists of efforts in a new and fascinating poetic form introduced into England by the Norman-French, the metrical romance. The typical romance was a rambling tale of adventure, in which evil

knights, robbers, giants, Saracens, and other inimical personages, were overthrown by a wandering chevalier, in the interest of some distressed damsel or of holy church. It dealt in a rather desultory and unreal, but highly entertaining way, with the three great interests of the Middle Ages,—knightly prowess, chivalric love, and religion. It gave scope, in the description of feasts and tournaments, of armor, dress, and hunting equipage, for the mediæval love of pageantry and gay color; it ministered to the mediæval craving after the supernatural, the extravagant, and the thrilling; above all, it afforded an outlet to the sentiment of woman-worship, which, taking its rise in the cult of the Virgin Mary, had then been secularized by the poets of Provence, and become a vital part of the great creed of feudal chivalry.

Their Sources.

The *trouvères*, as the poets who composed and recited these romances were called, borrowed the material of their richly variegated tales wherever they could find it. A part of it came from Italy and the East, and out of this they made the Troy cycle and the cycle of Alexander the Great. A part of it they found near at hand, in the adventures of Charlemagne and his twelve peers. But the richest store-house of romance which they had to draw upon, was in the Celtic parts of England and Brittany, where for generations, probably for centuries, there had been growing up a mass of legend connected with King Arthur. A number of these Arthurian legends were gathered up, before the middle of the twelfth century, in a great Latin work called the *Historia Bretonum*, by Geoffrey of Monmouth, a Welsh writer, who also added stories of his own invention. This rather bare chronicle of Geoffrey's was seized upon by the *trouvères*, and out of it began to branch all manner of romantic episode. The book was translated into French verse by Wace of Jersey, and through this channel came, about the year 1200, into the hands of Layamon, the first writer of romance in the crude

English speech which was just then awaking from its century and a half of silence.

All that we know of Layamon, and of how he came to write his *Brut*, he tells himself in the quaint and touching words with which the poem opens: Layamon's "Brut."

"There was a priest in the land was named Layamon; he was son of Leovenath,—may God be gracious to him! He dwelt at Ernley, at a noble church upon Severn bank. . . It came to him in mind and in his chief thought that he would tell the noble deeds of the English; what the men were named, and whence they came, who first had the English land after the flood. . . Layamon began to journey wide over this land, and procured the noble books which he took for authority. He took the English book that Saint Bede made;* another he took in Latin, that Saint Albin made and the fair Austin† . . ; the third book he took . . that a French clerk made, named Wace. . . Layamon laid these books before him and turned over the leaves; lovingly he beheld them—may the Lord be merciful to him! Pen he took with fingers, and wrote on book-skin, and compressed the three books into one."

The poem opens with an account of how "Eneas the duke," after the destruction of Troy, flees into Italy, and builds him a "great burg." After many years his great-grandson, Brutus, sets out with all his people to find a new land in the west. They pass the Pillars of Hercules, "tall posts of strong marble stone," where they find the mermaidens, "beasts of great deceit, and so sweet that many men are not able to quit them." After further adventures in Spain and France, they come at length to the shores of England, and land "at Dartmouth in Totnes." The poem has now run on for two thousand lines, and the story

* The Anglo-Saxon version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History.

† Probably the original Latin version of Bede, the authorship being mistaken by Layamon.

has just begun. But leisurely as Layamon is, he is seldom tedious; the story lures one on from page to page, until one forgets or pardons the enormous length. In treating the Arthur legends, Layamon is not content merely to transcribe his predecessors. His home was near the borders of Wales, where these legends were native; and he either gathered up or freely invented several additions of the utmost importance. The most notable of these are his story of the founding of the Round Table, and his account of the fays who are present at Arthur's birth and who carry him after his last battle to the mystic isle of Avalon.

English Imitations of Norman-French Romances.

After Layamon had shown the way to romance writing in the native tongue, other poets in rapidly increasing numbers followed in his footsteps. Rude at first, their efforts gradually approached, in ease and grace, those of their Norman-French teachers, though never quite rivalling the limpid *trouvère* verse. Almost all the English romances of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are free renderings from French originals. This is true not only of those which deal with continental heroes, like Charlemagne and Alexander, or which tell a tale of continental origin, like *Amis and Amiloun* and *Floris and Blancheflour;* but also of the Arthur stories, whose source was British, and even of the stories of purely English heroes, *Bevis of Hampton*, and *Guy of Warwick*. The raw material had to be refined by the cunning Norman-French artisans before the less skilled workers in the English tongue could handle it. But of all the Arthurian romances in English of this period, such as *Sir Tristrem, Arthour and Merlin, Morte d'Arthure*, and *The Awentyres* (adventures) *of Arthur at the Tarn Watheling* (Tarn Wadling in Cumberland), the one which is of most genuine native English workmanship is the best of all, and is one of the most charming romances of the world. This is *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*. Its date is about 1320–1330.

When the poem opens, King Arthur and his court are gathered in the hall at Camelot to celebrate the feast of the New Year. The king, "so busied him his young blood and his wild brain," will not eat until some adventure has befallen. As the first course comes in "with cracking of trumpets," and the "noise of nakers (drums), with noble pipes," there suddenly rushes in at the hall door a gigantic knight, clothed entirely in green, mounted on a green foal, and bearing in one hand a holly bough, in the other a great axe. He rides to the dais, and challenges any knight to give him a blow with his axe, and to abide one in turn. Gawayne, the king's nephew, smites off the head of the Green Knight, who quietly picks it up by the hair, and holds it out toward Gawayne, until the lips speak, giving him rendezvous at the Green Chapel on the next New Year's day.

Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight.

On All-hallow's day, Gawayne sets out upon his horse Gringolet, and journeys through North Wales, past Holyhead into the wilderness of Wirral; "sometimes with worms (serpents) he wars, with wolves and bears," with giants and wood-satyrs, until at last on Christmas-eve he comes to a great forest of hoar oaks. He calls upon Mary, "mildest mother so dear," to help him. Immediately he sees a fair castle standing on a hill; and asking shelter, he is courteously received by the lord of the castle and his fair young wife, and is assured that the Green Chapel is near at hand.

After the Christmas festivities are over, his host prepares for a great hunt, to last three days; and a jesting compact is made between them that at the end of each day they shall give each other whatever good thing they have won. While her lord is absent on the hunt, the lady of the castle tries in vain to induce Gawayne to make love to her, and bestows upon him a kiss. Anxious to fulfil his compact, he in turn gives the kiss to her lord each night when the hunt is over, and receives as a counter-gift the spoils of the

chase. At their last meeting the lady persuades Gawayne to take as a gift a green lace belt which will protect him from mortal harm. Thinking it "a jewel for the jeopardy" that he is to run at the Green Chapel, he keeps the gift a secret, and thus proves false to his compact.

On New Year's morning he sets out through a storm of snow, past forests and cliffs, where "each hill had a hat and a mist-cloak," to find the Green Chapel. It proves to be a grass-covered hollow mound, in a desert valley, "the most cursed kirk," says Gawayne, "that ever I came in." The Green Knight appears, and deals a blow with his axe upon Gawayne's bent neck. But he only pierces the skin, and Gawayne, seeing the blood fall on the snow, claps on his helmet, draws his sword, and declares the compact fulfilled. The Green Knight then discloses the fact that he is the lord of the castle where Gawayne has just been entertained, that with him dwells the fairy-woman Morgain, who, because of her hatred of Guinevere, has sent him to frighten her at Christmas feast with the sight of a severed head talking, and who has been trying to lead Gawayne into bad faith and untruthfulness, in order that her husband's axe may have power upon him. By his purity and truth Gawayne has been saved, except for the slight wound as punishment for concealing the gift of the girdle. Gawayne swears to wear the "lovelace" in remembrance of his weakness; and ever afterward each knight of the Round Table, and every lady of Arthur's court, wears a bright green belt for Gawayne's sake.

The picturesque and nervous language of the poem, its bright humor and fancy, and the vivid beauty of its descriptions, combine with its moral sweetness to make this the most delightful blossom of all pre-Chaucerian romance. *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight* contains fair promise not only of Chaucer's *Knight's Tale,* but even of Spenser's *Faerie Queene.*

While the shimmering tapestry and cloth of gold of

these bright romances was being woven to beguile the tedium of castle halls, a more sombre literary fabric grew under the patient hands of monks and religious enthusiasts. The *Cursor Mundi*, the author of which is unknown, deserves particular comment. Though religious in aim and in matter, it shows a wholesome secular desire to be entertaining. The author, in beginning, laments the absorption of the readers of his day in frivolous romance, and proposes to give them in place of these vain tales of earthly love, a tale of divine love which shall be equally thrilling. He then proceeds to tell in flowing verse the story of God's dealings with man, from the Creation to the final redemption, following in general the biblical narrative, but adorning it with popular legends, both sacred and secular, and with all manner of quaint digressions. The ambition of the author has really been accomplished; his book is indeed a "religious romance," and must have been a respectable rival of its more worldly brothers, in catching the ear of such readers as were willing to be edified at the same time that they were entertained.

Religious Poetry: the "Cursor Mundi"

Of another religious writer whose work rises to the dignity of literature, the name and story have fortunately been preserved. This is Richard Rolle, the hermit of Hampole in southern Yorkshire, who was born about 1300 and died in 1349. In his youth he went to Oxford, then at the height of its fame as a centre of scholastic learning; but the mysticism and erratic ardor of his nature made him soon revolt against the dry intellectuality of the scholastic teaching. He left college, made him a hermit's shroud out of two of his sister's gowns and his father's hood, and began the life of a religious solitary and mystic. His cell at Hampole, near a Cistercian nunnery, was after his death visited as a miracle-working shrine, and cared for by the nuns. He wrote many canticles of divine love, some of which are of unusual intensity. His longest

Richard Rolle of Hampole.

work is the *Pricke of Conscience*, which deals with the life of man and the terrors of the Last Judgment.

The "Love Rune" of Thomas de Hales.

But of all the religious writings of this period, by far the most beautiful are two poems, one lyric, the other narrative, which approach the subject of divine love from the personal side, and treat it with an intimate personal pathos. The first is the famous "Love Rune" of Thomas de Hales, a monk of the Minor Friars. He tells us in the first stanza that he was besought by a maid of Christ to make her a love-song, in order that she might learn therefrom how to choose a worthy and faithful lover. The monkish poet consents, but goes on to tell her how false and fleeting is all worldly love; how all earthly lovers vanish and are forgotten.

Hwer is Paris and Heleyne
That weren so bryght and feyre on ble?
Amadas, Tristram, and Dideyne,
Yseude, and alle the?
Ector, with his scharpë meyne,
And Cesar rich of worldës fee?
Hes beoth iglyden ut of the reyne,
So the scheft is of the clee.

(Where is Paris and Helen, that were so bright and fair of countenance? Amadas, Tristram, Dido, Iseult and all those? Hector with his sharp strength, and Cæsar rich with the world's fee [wealth]? They be glided out of the realm, as the shaft is from the clew [bow-string].

"But there is another lover," the poet continues, who is "richer than Henry our King, and whose dwelling is fairer than Solomon's house of jasper and sapphire. Choose Him, and may God bring thee to His bride-chamber in Heaven." The poem is well-nigh perfect in form, and for rich and tender melody bears comparison with the best lyrical work of Shakespeare's age. It shines out like a gem from the mass of ruder song about it.

The other religious poem, which deserves to be classed with this by reason of its beauty and humanity, is much longer. It is called *The Pearl.* A father falls asleep on the grave of his lost daughter, whose name seems to have been Margaret (*i.e.*, "the pearl"). In a vision he sees her, and beholds the celestial country where she dwells. He dreams that he is transported to a wonderful land, through which a musical river flows over pearly sand, and stones that glitter like stars on a winter night. Around him are "crystal cliffs so clear of kind," forests that gleam like silver and ring with the melody of bright-hued birds. On the other side of the river, at the foot of a gleaming cliff, he sees a maid sitting, clothed in bright raiment trimmed with pearls, and in the midst of her breast a great pearl. She rises and comes toward him. Then the father tries to cross over, but being unable, cries out to know if she is indeed his pearl, since the loss of which he has been "a joyless jeweller." The maiden tells him that his pearl is not really lost, gently reproves the impatience of his grief, and expounds—a little too ingeniously—some of the mysteries of Heaven, where she reigns as a queen with Mary. The father begs to be taken to her abiding-place; she tells him that he may see, but cannot enter, "that clean cloister." She bids him go along the river-bank until he comes to a hill. Arrived at the top, he sees afar off the celestial city, "pitched upon gems," with its walls of jasper and streets of gold. At the wonder of the sight he stands, "still as a dazed quail," and gazing sees, "right as the mighty moon gan rise," the Virgins walking in procession with the Lamb of God. His daughter is one of them.

"The Pearl."

> Then saw I there my little queen—
> Lord! much of mirth was that she made
> Among her mates.

He strives in transport to cross over and be with her; but it is not pleasing to God that he should come, and the dreamer awakes.

The Pearl exists in the same manuscript with two other remarkable religious poems, entitled respectively *Cleanness* and *Patience*. The first preaches the doctrine of purity of life, and enforces it with vivid transcriptions from the Bible stories of the destruction of Sodom, the smiting of Belshazzar for polluting the sacred vessels, and other like instances. The second illustrates the virtue of patience by the story of Jonah,—a little humorously, to a modern mind. The descriptions are some of them extraordinarily vivid, and the language has the same nervous vigor and graphic picturesqueness which distinguishes that of *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*. This, indeed, has come down to us in the same manuscript with the *Pearl* and *Cleanness* and *Patience*, and many scholars believe that they are all four the work of one man. If so, he was the most considerable poet between Cynewulf and Chaucer.

"Cleanness" and "Patience."

The flowing together of Saxon and Norman-French brought about important results in the metre as well as in the vocabulary of the new language. Saxon poetry depended for its rhythmical effect upon two devices, alliteration and accent. Each verse-line, no matter how long, contained four accents; and three (sometimes four) of these accents had to fall on syllables beginning with the same consonant or with a vowel. The number of syllables in any given line could vary indefinitely; and the accents could fall anywhere in the line, provided two occurred in the first half and one (or two) in the second half. The result was that the rhythm of Saxon verse was exceedingly loose and pliable. Norman-French verse depended upon two devices quite different from these,—rhyme, and regular line-length; the metrical system was therefore very definite and exact.

Fusion of Saxon and French Metrical Systems.

When the fusion came, there was a struggle as to which system should prevail in the new language. Some of the English poets, even as late as Langland, Chaucer's contemporary, stood out for the old system of accent and alliteration, without rhyme and without fixed line-length; others imitated slavishly the French system of rhyme and uniform line-length; still others, like the author of *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight*, compromised by retaining alliteration and introducing rhyme at fixed intervals; still others wobbled awkwardly between the two systems, using alliteration and rhyme in a confused and haphazard way in the same poem. The final outcome of the struggle, however, was that English verse gave up regular alliteration, retaining it only as an occasional and almost accidental ornament, and adopted rhyme outright. The principle of accent, however, was retained; but, under stress of the French prosody, it was reduced to greater regularity. Here again, as in the case of the vocabulary, the merging of Saxon and French had a most happy result. It is by reason of this merging that English is capable of more subtle and varied lyrical effects than any other modern language.

Nor did the poets fail to show, even as early as the thirteenth century, their appreciation of what an exquisite instrument had fallen into their hands; for we possess several songs of that period and a little later, which have in them the promise of Herrick and of Shelley. They are all songs of love and of spring. The best known is perhaps the "Cuckoo Song," with its refrain of "Loude sing Cuckoo!"; but even more charming is the spring-song "Lent is come with love to town," and the love-song called "Alisoun," with its delightful opening:

Bitwenë Mersh and Averil
When spray * begineth to springë,
The little fowlës † have hyre ‡ will
On hyrë lud § to singë.

* Foliage. † Birds. ‡ Their. § Voice.

The England which finds utterance in these songs is a very different England from that which had spoken in "The Wanderer," and "The Battle of Brunanburh." It is no longer the fierce and gloomy aspects of Nature, but her bright and laughing moods, that are sung. The imaginations of men work now not in terms of war but of peace; monotonous and melancholy grandeurs have given way to a bright and various humanity. The Norman invasion has done its work. The conquerors have ceased to be such, for foreign wars and centuries of domestic intercourse have broken down the distinction between men of Norman and men of Saxon blood. The new language is formed, a new and vigorous national life is everywhere manifest. A new poet is needed, great enough to gather up and make intelligible to itself this shifting, many-colored life; and Chaucer is at hand.

Final Result of the Norman Conquest.

CHAPTER III

THE AGE OF CHAUCER

I

GEOFFREY CHAUCER was born about 1340, of a family of London merchants. His father, a member of the Corporation of Vintners, had been purveyor to King Edward III. It was probably this family connection with the court which made it possible for Chaucer, when about seventeen, to become a page in the household of the King's daughter-in-law, the Duchess of Clarence. Two years later he went with the king's army to France. Here he saw unrolled the brilliant pageant of mediæval war, as the French chronicler Froissart has pictured it, at a time when chivalry and knighthood, though they had lost something of their inner meaning, were at their highest point of outward splendor. He beheld the unsuccessful siege of the city of Rheims; was captured by the French, and held as a prisoner of war until ransomed by his royal master.

Chaucer's Early Life.

On his return to England he was made a Squire of the King's Bedchamber, and probably spent the next ten years at Edward's court, then the most brilliant in Europe. The court of Edward was still practically a French court; and Chaucer, although he seems to have decided very early to use his native tongue, necessarily turned to France for his literary models. The first period of his poetic life was spent in assimilating all that the French *trouvères* and ballad-writers had to teach him concerning his chosen art. The most famous work which the school of French *trouvères* had produced, was the *Roman de la Rose*, an elaborate alle-

gory of Love, the rose, growing in a mystic garden, warded by symbolic powers from the lover's approach, and provoking endless disquisitions, serious or satirical, such as the later Middle Ages loved to spend upon the subtleties of sentiment. The *Roman de la Rose* was Chaucer's first training school, and he took his training with characteristic thoroughness by translating the poem into English verse. The French poet Des Champs congratulates Chaucer, above all things, on having "planted the rose-tree in the isle of giants." Less than two thousand lines of this translation have survived; indeed, the whole may never have been completed. But the *Roman de la Rose* left a profound impression upon Chaucer's work, and for years he thought and wrote in the atmosphere which it created for him. During these years of French influence he wrote, for the knights and ladies of King Edward's court, those "ballades, roundels, virelays," by which his fellow-poet Gower says "the land fulfilled was over all." The most important work which remains to us from his pure French period, however, is the *Book of the Duchesse*, also known as "*The Death of Blaunche the Duchesse*," written in 1369, to solace the bereavement of her husband John of Gaunt, the king's third son.

His French Period.

In 1370, Chaucer was sent to the Continent on royal business. This was the first of many official missions which he executed for the king during the next ten years, in various parts of Europe. The opportunity afforded by these journeys for converse with many types of men, and observation of widely varying manners, was of the utmost importance in his poetic education.

On Chaucer's return to England after his first Italian mission, his services were rewarded by the gift of the important post of controller of the customs on wool, skins, and tanned hides, at the port of London; to which was added the complimentary grant of a daily pitcher of wine from the king's cellars. His office as controller was an

arduous one, requiring his constant personal attendance. He was by this time married to his wife Philippa, lady-in-waiting to the consort of John of Gaunt, and lived in a house over one of the city gates near the Tower. We get from his poems various glimpses of his daily life, especially of the eagerness for study, which, after the day's work was done, would send him home, regardless of rest and "newe thinges," to sit "as domb as any stone" over his book, until his eyes were dazed. The unquenchable curiosity of the men of the Renaissance was his, more than a century before the Renaissance really began in England. His, too, was their thirst for expression. The great books he had come to know in Italy gave him no peace, until he should equal or surpass them. In 1382, on the betrothal of the boy king, Richard II., to the young princess Anne of Bohemia, Chaucer wrote a wedding poem for the royal pair, the *Parlement of Foules* (Birds). *Troilus and Creseide* and the *House of Fame* belong also to this central or "Italian period" of Chaucer's literary life. In 1385 he was allowed to discharge his duties as customs officer by deputy. The first result of his new-found leisure was the *Legend of Goode Wommen,* dedicated to the young queen. In 1386 he was elected to Parliament as member from Kent. This Parliament was in opposition to the king, and succeeded in forcing upon him a council, one of the actions of which was to dismiss Chaucer from his office as controller. Three years later Richard II. again took affairs into his own hands, and as a renewed sign of the royal favor Chaucer was made clerk of the King's works (supervising architect) at Westminster, the Tower, Windsor Castle, and other places. During these years his masterpiece, the *Canterbury Tales,* was growing under his hand. Toward the end of Richard II.'s reign Chaucer fell into poverty, from causes not well known; but in 1399, on the accession of Henry IV., a ballad entitled "The Com-

Middle Life: Italian Period.

Later life: English Period.

pleint of Chaucer to his Empty Purse" brought him substantial aid. He died in 1400, after signing a ninety-nine year lease of a house in St. Paul's Churchyard.

Italian influence on Chaucer.

The most important event in Chaucer's life was his first visit to Italy, on the king's business, in 1372. Italy was then at the zenith of her artistic energy, in the full splendor of that illumination which had followed the intellectual twilight of the Middle Ages, and which we know as the Renaissance, or "New Birth." Each of her little city-states was a centre of marvellous activity, and everywhere were being produced those masterpieces of painting, sculpture, and architecture, which still make Italy a place of pilgrimage for all lovers of art. The literary activity was equally great, at least in Tuscany. Dante had been dead for half a century, but his poetry was just beginning to assert itself as one of the world-forces in the realm of imagination. Petrarch, the grave, accomplished scholar and elegant poet, was passing his closing years at his villa of Arqua, near Padua; Boccaccio, poet, tale-writer, pedant, and worldling, was spending the autumn of his life among the cypress and laurel slopes of Fiesole, above Florence. The world which lay open to Chaucer's gaze when he crossed the Alps, was therefore one calculated to fascinate and stimulate him in the highest degree. Whether he saw Petrarch or Boccaccio in person is not known, but, from this time on, his work was largely influenced by them, as well as by Dante. Through all three he came into closer contact with the great literature of the past, and acquired a new reverence for the ancient masters.

Troilus and Creseide.

Both the *Parlement of Foules* and the *House of Fame* are colored with Italian reminiscence; but the chief fruit of Chaucer's Italian journeys was the long poem adapted from Boccaccio's *Philostrato* (The Love-stricken One), entitled by Chaucer *Troilus and Creseide*. The story of the love of the young Trojan hero for Cressida, and of her desertion of him for the Greek

Diomedes, had grown gradually through the Middle Ages until it reached Boccaccio's hand, who gave it an animated but ornate treatment in facile verse. Chaucer, though pretending only to translate, changed the theme radically. In his hands, the lovers' go-between, Pandarus, is transformed from a gilded youth of Troilus's own age and temperament, to a middle-aged man, plausible, good-natured, full of easy worldly wisdom and vulgar materialistic ideals,—a character as true to type and as vitally alive as if Shakespeare had drawn him. The growth of the love-passion in Cressida's heart is traced through its gradual stages with a psychological subtlety entirely new in English poetry. The action, dialogue, and "stage-setting" of the poem are all given with the satisfying touch of a master-dramatist, and with the most surprising realism. Though the scene is ancient Troy, and the costumes are those of mediæval knights and ladies, we seem, in many passages of the poem, to be looking at a modern play or reading from a modern novel, so homely and actual does it appear. To be sure, Chaucer has not yet delivered himself from the mediæval vice of tediousness. Troilus thinks nothing of expatiating to Pandarus upon the least of love's woes, through a score of seven-line stanzas. The brevity, directness, and pregnancy of Chaucer's latest style were still beyond his grasp.

The *Legend of Goode Wommen* is chiefly interesting because of its prologue. In the body of the poem, Cleopatra, Dido, Thisbe, and other types of feminine devotion in love, are given celebration, in covert tribute to the wifely virtues of the young queen, whose favor had probably secured for the poet release from the drudgery of the customs office. These stories are adapted from a Latin work of Boccaccio, *De Claris Mulieribus*. The long prologue, original with Chaucer, is the most winning of his many passages of personal confession and self-revealment.

"Legend of Goode Wommen."

He represents himself as wandering in the fields on the May-day, the only season which can tempt him from his books. The birds are singing to their mates their song of "blessed be Seynt Valentyn!", and Zephyrus and Flora, as "god and goddesse of the flowry mede," have spread the earth with fragrant blossoms. But the poet has eyes only for one flower, the daisy, the "emperice (empress) and flour of floures alle." All day long he leans and pores upon the flower; and when at last it has folded its leaves at the coming of night, he goes home to rest, with the thought of rising early to gaze upon it once more. He makes his couch out of doors, in a little arbor, "for deyntee of the newe someres sake," and here he has a wonderful dream. He dreams that he is again in the fields, kneeling by the daisy, and sees approaching a procession of bright forms. First comes the young god of love, clad in silk embroidered with red rose-leaves and sprays of green, his "gilt hair" crowned with light, in his hand two fiery darts, and his wings spread angel-like. He leads by the hand a queen, clad in green and crowned with a fillet of daisies under a band of gold. She is Alcestis, type of noblest wifely devotion. Behind her comes an endless train of women who have been "trewe of love." They kneel in a circle about the poet, and sing with one voice honor to woman's truth, and to the daisy flower, the emblem of Alcestis. The love-god then glowers angrily upon Chaucer, and upbraids him for having done despite to women, in translating the *Roman de la Rose,* with its satire upon their foibles; and in writing the story of Cressida, so dishonorable to the steadfastness of the sex. Alcestis comes to his rescue, and agrees to pardon his misdeeds if he will spend the rest of his life in making a "glorious Legend of Goode Wommen," and will send it, on her behalf, to the English queen. Chaucer promises solemnly, and as soon as he wakes, betakes himself to his task.

It is probable that Chaucer did indeed enter upon this

poem with the design of devoting to it many years, and of making it his masterpiece. But he soon tired of it, for the reason that all the stories illustrate the same theme, and lack, when taken together, that element of surprise and contrast essential to keep up the interest. As he went on he treated his work more and more perfunctorily, and at last left it unfinished.

But the ambition to crown his life with some monumental work remained. The drift of his genius, as he grew older, was more and more toward the dramatic perception of real life. He had a wide experience of men, of all ranks and conditions; and he had been storing up for years, with his keenly observant, quiet eyes, the materials for a presentation of contemporary society on a great scale. Moreover, while Chaucer was growing up, England had been growing conscious of herself. The struggle with France had unified the people at last into a homogeneous body, no longer Norman and Saxon, but English; and the brilliancy of Edward III.'s early reign had given to this new people their first intoxicating draught of national pride. The growing power of parliament tended to foster the feeling of solidarity and self-consciousness in the nation. As a member of parliament and a government officer, Chaucer felt these influences to the full. It must have seemed more and more important to him that the crowning work of his life should in some way represent the varied thought and the varied external spectacle of the actual society in which he moved. With the happy fortune of genius, he hit, in his *Canterbury Tales*, upon a scheme wonderfully conceived for the ends he had in view. Collections of stories, both secular and sacred, had been popular in the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance inherited the taste for them, while enlarging their scope, and humanizing their content. Boccaccio had set the example of throwing a graceful trellis-work of incident and dialogue

Influence of the New National Life on Chaucer.

Plan of the Canterbury Tales.

about the separate stories of a collection. In his *Decamerone* a company of aristocratic young people are represented as having taken refuge from the plague raging in Florence, in a villa on the slopes of Fiesole. They wander through the valleys of oleanders and myrtles, or sit beside the fountains of the villa gardens, and beguile the time with tales of sentiment and intrigue. Chaucer, while adopting a similar framework, made his setting much more national and racy; individualized his characters so as to make of them a gallery of living portraits of his time; and varied his Tales so as to include almost all the types of narrative known to literature at the close of the Middle Ages.

He represents himself as alighting, one spring evening, at the Tabard Inn, in Southwark, a suburb at the southern end of London Bridge, where afterward the famous Elizabethan playhouses, Shakespeare's among them, were to arise. Southwark was the place of departure and arrival for all South-of-England travel, and especially for pilgrimages to the world-renowned shrine of Thomas-a-Becket, at Canterbury. A company bent on such a pilgrimage Chaucer finds gathered in the inn; he makes their acquaintance, and joins himself with them for the journey. Counting the poet, they are thirty in all. There is a Knight lately come from the foreign wars, a man who has fought in Prussia and in Turkey, jousted in Trasimene, and been present at the storming of Alexandria,—a high-minded, gentle-mannered, knightly adventurer, type of the chivalry which was passing rapidly away. With him is his son, a young Squire, curly haired and gay, his short, white-sleeved gown embroidered like a mead with red and white flowers; he is an epitome of the gifts and graces of brilliant youth. Their servant is a Yeoman, in coat and hood of green, a sheaf of peacock-arrows under his belt, a mighty bow in his hand, and a silver image of St. Christopher upon his breast; he is the type of that sturdy English yeomanry, which with its gray

The Pilgrims at the Tabard.

goose shafts humbled the pride of France at Crecy and Agincourt. There is a whole group of ecclesiastical figures, representing in their numbers and variety the immense growth of the mediæval Church. Most of them are satirical portraits, in their worldliness and gross materialism only too faithful representatives of the corrupt Catholicism against which Wyclif struggled. First of all there is a monk, who cares only for hunting and good cheer; his bald head shines like glass, his "steep eyes" roll in his head; he rides a sleek brown palfrey, and has "many a dainty horse" in his stables; his sleeves are trimmed with fine fur at the wrists, his hood is fastened under his chin with a gold love-knot. As a companion figure to the hunting monk, Chaucer gives us "Madame Eglantyne," the prioress; she is a teacher of young ladies, speaks French "after the school of Stratford-atte-bowe," is exquisite in her table-manners, counterfeiting as well as she can the stately behavior of the court. Other ecclesiastics are there, hangers-on and caterpillars of the Church: the Summoner, a repulsive person with "fire-red Cherubim face"; the Pardoner, with his bag full of pardons "come from Rome all hot," and of bits of cloth and pig's-bones which he sells as relics of the holy saints. Chaucer's treatment of these evil churchmen is highly good-natured and tolerant; he never takes the tone of moral indignation against them. But he does better; he sets beside them, as type of the true shepherd of the Church, a "poor parson," such as, under Wyclif's teaching, had spread over England, beginning that great movement for the purification of the Church, which was to result, more than a century later, in the Reformation. Chaucer paints the character of the Parson, poor in this world's goods but "rich of holy thought and work," with loving and reverent touch. The Parson's brother travels with him—a Plowman, a "true swinker and a good," who helps his poor neighbors without hire and loves them as himself; he

reminds us of that Piers Plowman of whom Langland, Chaucer's great contemporary and anti-type, wrote in his Vision. A crowd of other figures fill the canvas. There is a Shipman from the west-country, a representative of those adventurous seamen, half merchant-sailors, half smugglers and pirates, who had already made England's name a terror on the seas, and paved the way for her future naval supremacy. There is a poor Clerk of Oxford, riding a horse as lean as a rake, and dressed in threadbare cloak, who spends all that he can beg or borrow upon books; he represents that passion for learning which was already astir everywhere in Europe, and which was waiting only the magic touch of the new-found classical literature to blossom out into genuine thought and imagination. There is a Merchant, in a Flemish beaver, on a high horse, concealing, with the grave importance of his air, the fact that he is in debt. There is a group of guild-men, in the livery of their guild, all worthy to be aldermen; together with the merchant, they represent the mercantile and manufacturing activity which was lifting England rapidly to the rank of a great commercial power. There is the Wife of Bath, a figure conceived with masterly humor and realism, a permanent human type; she has had "husbands five at church-door," and, though "somdel deaf," expects to live to wed several others; she rides on an ambler, with spurs and scarlet hose on her feet, and on her head a hat as broad as a buckler. These, and a dozen others, are all painted in vivid colors, and with a psychological truth which remind us of the portraits of the Flemish painter Van Eyck, Chaucer's contemporary. Taken as a whole, they represent the entire range of English society in the fourteenth century, with the exception of the highest aristocracy and the lowest order of villeins or serfs.

At supper this goodly company hears from the host of the Tabard a proposition that on their journey to Canter-

bury, to beguile the tedium of the ride, each of them shall tell two tales, and on the homeward journey two more.* He agrees to travel with them, to act as master-of-ceremonies, and on their return to render judgment as to who has told the best story, the winner to be given a supper at the general expense. So it is agreed. The next morning they set out bright and early on their journey southward to the cathedral city. They draw lots to determine who shall tell the first tale. The lot falls to the Knight, who tells the charming chivalric story of Palamon and Arcite. When it is finished the Host calls upon the Monk to follow. But the Miller, who is already drunk and quarrelsome, insists on being heard, and launches forthwith into a very unedifying tale. The Host rises in his stirrups and calls on the Parson for a story, "by Goddes dignitee!" The Parson reproves him for swearing; whereupon the Host cries that he "smells a Lollard † in the wind," and bids the company prepare for a sermon. This is too much for the Shipman, who breaks in impatiently. When the Host calls upon the Prioress, he changes his bluff manner to correspond with her rank and excessive refinement, speaking with polite circumlocution, "as courteously as it had been a maid." The Prioress responds graciously, and tells the story of Hugh of Lincoln, the little martyr who, after his throat had been cut by the wicked Jews, and his body thrown into a pit, still sings with clear young voice his *Alma Redemptoris* to the glory of the Virgin.

The Pilgrims on the Road.

So the stories continue, interrupted constantly by vivid dialogue and action on the part of the pilgrims. Two of the most charming tales are told by the Clerk and the

* Counting the Host and the Canon's Yeoman (who joins them on the road) the company consisted of thirty-two persons, making a total of a hundred and twenty-eight tales to be told. Less than a fifth of this number were actually written, and several of these were left fragmentary.

† The followers of Wyclif were called Lollards. See p. 50.

young Squire. The Clerk, after he has been rallied by the Host upon his still and thoughtful manner of riding, agrees to relate a story which he learned at Padua of "Francis Petrarch, the laureate poet, whose rhetoric sweet enlumined all Italy of poetry." It is the story of Patient Grissel, which Chaucer borrowed from Petrarch's Latin version. The Squire's tale, as befits his years and disposition, is a bright tale of love, adventure, and magic, in which figure a flying horse of brass and other wonders. Chaucer introduces himself into the succession of story-tellers with characteristic modesty and sly humor. Sobered by the miraculous tale of Hugh of Lincoln, the company is riding silently along, when the Host, to break the awe-struck mood, turns to Chaucer, and begins to joke him upon his shy abstracted air and his corpulency:

"'what man artow?' quod he;
'Thou lookest as thou wouldest find an hare,
Forever upon the ground I see thee stare.
Approachë near, and look up merrily.
Now ware you, sirs, and let this man have place;
He in the waist is shape as well as I . . .
He seemeth elvish by his countenancë
For unto no wight doeth he dalliancë.

Chaucer, thus rallied, begins one of those doggerel rhymes of knightly adventure, to which the romances of chivalry had in his day degenerated. The *Rhyme of Sir Thopas* is a capital burlesque of a style of poetry which Chaucer himself had come to supplant. He has not got far before the Host cries out upon the "drasty rhyming," and Chaucer meekly agrees to contribute instead "a little thing in prose," a "moral tale;" and he proceeds with the story of Melibeus and his wife Prudence, a very dreary tale indeed, matched for tediousness only by the prose sermon put into the mouth of the Parson, with which the Canterbury Tales, in the fragmentary form in which they were left,

conclude. It is curious to note how Chaucer's style becomes awkward, involved, and wearisome, as soon as he deserts his natural medium of verse, and attempts to write in prose.

In the sixteenth century and later, when, owing to the change in the pronunciation of words (especially the loss of the final *e*), the secret of Chaucer's versification was lost, he was regarded as a barbarous writer, ignorant of prosody, and with no ear for the melody of verse. The contrary of this was the case. He was an artist in verse-effects, who paid constant and delicate heed to the niceties of rhythm and tone-color. In a half-humorous address to his scrivener Adam, he calls down curses upon that unworthy servant, for spoiling good verses by bad copying, and in Troilus he beseeches his readers not to "mismetre" his book. From his very earliest poems, his work is in all formal details faultless; and as he progressed in skill, his music became constantly more varied and flexible. His early manner reaches its height in the exquisite rondel, intricate in form but handled with great simplicity of effect, which brings the *Parlement of Foules* to a melodious close. A good example of his later music may be found in the description of the Temple of Venus in the Knight's Tale; or, as a study in a graver key, in the ballad "Flee fro the Press," which marks so impressively the deepening seriousness of Chaucer's mind in his last years.

Chaucer's Literary Art.

Chaucer employed three principal metres: the eight-syllable line, rhyming in couplets, as in the *Book of the Duchesse;* the ten-syllable line, also rhyming in couplets, as in the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales; and the same line arranged in seven-line stanzas* (known later as "rhyme royal"), as in Troilus. In his shorter poems he made, however, endless metrical experiments, and showed a mastery of intricate verse-forms, remarkable even in an

* Rhyming a, b, a, b, b, c, c.

age when the French had made verse-writing a matter of gymnastic skill.

Sources of His Material.

As for his material, Chaucer did not hesitate to take what suited him, wherever he found it; sometimes borrowing wholesale without change, oftener adapting and reworking his matter freely. Any such thing as "originality," in the modern sense, was undreamed of in the Middle Ages; the material of literature was common property, and the same stories were endlessly repeated. Whoever would learn the "sources" from which Chaucer drew, must ransack the storehouse of mediæval fiction, and examine no little of mediæval science and philosophy. Chaucer's was the only originality then possible,—he improved whatever he borrowed, and stamped it with his individuality of thought and style. That part of his work which we value most, however, such as the prologues to the Legend of Good Women and to the Canterbury Tales, was original in every sense.

II

Chaucer lived and wrote in a world where the lurid lights and grotesque shadows of the Middle Ages were only beginning to be penetrated by the clear dawn-light of modern culture. He, first of all men in England, felt the influence of that new illumination, as it shone from France, and from beyond the Alps; and he followed it until it brought him out from among the abstractions and the monotonous dreams of the Middle Ages into a world of living reality, variety, and humor. In this, he was far beyond his age. The full force of his originality is felt when he is compared with John Gower,—the "moral Gower" to whom he dedicated his Troilus. Chaucer, in his mature work, looks forward to the England of the Tudors; Gower is still hopelessly entangled in the abstractions and formless dreams of mediævalism.

Chaucer Contrasted with Gower.

John Gower (1325–1408) was an aristocrat and conservative, owning rich manors in Kent and elsewhere. He was known at court, and much appreciated there as a poet, but held no official position. He was extremely pious, and in old age retired with his wife to the priory of St. Mary Overy (now St. Saviour's) in Southwark, not far from the Tabard Inn which Chaucer had made famous. Here he spent his last days in devout observances; and here his sculptured figure can still be seen on his tomb, his head, crowned with roses, pillowed upon his three chief volumes. These were each written in a different tongue; the *Speculum Meditantis** in French; the *Vox Clamantis* in Latin; and the *Confessio Amantis* in English. This hesitation in the matter of language shows how much entangled he was in the past, in the ideas of a time when England was not yet conscious of her national identity.

Gower.

The *Confessio Amantis*, like the Canterbury Tales, is a collection of stories. The framework is imitated from the *Roman de la Rose;* a lover makes confession to a priest of Venus, a learned old man named Genius, and the stories come in by way of moral illustrations. Abstractions—vices, virtues, the seven deadly sins—take the place of real living figures. As a whole, the poem is a monument of tediousness; but a few of the stories are well-told.

The "Confessio Amantis."

The *Vox Clamantis* is interesting for historical reasons. The second half of the fourteenth century was a time of great suffering among the poor people of England. Four terrible plagues, the first in 1349, the last in 1375, swept over the country, carrying death everywhere. By one plague alone, half the population perished. Frightful storms destroyed the crops. There was an earthquake; and a terrific hailstorm, in the

'Vox Clamantis': the Peasant Revolt.

* A manuscript entitled *Mirour de l'omme* (*Speculum Hominis*) recently discovered and published by Mr. G. B. Macaulay, is probably the *Speculum Meditantis*, long believed to be irrecoverably lost.

midst of which, it was declared, a "devil appeared and spoke." The exactions of the Church, the extravagances of Edward III., and the heavy cost of his foreign wars, added to the burden borne by the distracted peasantry. The fearlessness with which the Oxford reformer, John Wyclif, attacked the corruptions of the Church, and questioned the fundamental rights of property, was like flame to the fuel of discontent. In 1381 an immense uprising of the peasants occurred, under the leadership of Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, and a socialist priest of Kent, named John Balle. They marched on London, sacked the Tower and the Savoy palace, and murdered an archbishop; it seemed as if the throne and the whole social order were about to be overturned. It was this state of things which prompted Gower to write his *Vox Clamantis*. As a land-owner in Kent, he felt the full brunt of the disturbance. He writes from the aristocratic point of view, representing the common people as turned into beasts, oxen, dogs, flies, and frogs, by the evil magic of the time. The dull old poem keeps an interest by virtue of the intense feeling which pervades it, of horror and dismay at the social volcano which had opened for a moment, threatening to engulf the nation.

Wyclif.

John Wyclif (1320?–1384), the man who by his teaching had helped, unintentionally, to foment the peasant rebellion, was primarily a religious reformer and theologian. His connection with English literature is, in a sense, accidental, but it is nevertheless very important. He attacked the temporal power of the church, advocating, partly in the interests of the overburdened poor, the appropriation by the state of all church property. While waging a war of theory on this and other ecclesiastical questions, he planned and carried out a great practical movement, known as the Lollard movement, for arousing the common people to a more vital religious life. He sent out simple,

The Lollard Movement.

devoted men, to preach the gospel in the native tongue, and to bring home to their hearers the living truths of religion which the formalism of the mediæval Church had obscured. These "poor priests," dressed in coarse russet robes and carrying staves, travelled through the length and breadth of the land, as Wesley's preachers travelled four centuries later, calling men back to the simple faith of early apostolic times. Wyclif and his Lollard priests began the great Protestant appeal from the dogmas of the Church to the Bible, which culminated, in the sixteenth century, in Luther and the Reformation. In order to make this appeal effective with the masses, Wyclif undertook to translate the whole of the Bible into English. With the assistance of Nicholas of Hereford, he completed his great task before his death in 1384. Wyclif's Bible was revised and somewhat simplified in style a few years later by John Purvey, and received its final form some time before the end of the century. It is the first great monument of prose style in English. By virtue of it, and of the sermons and tracts which he wrote in homely vigorous speech for the understanding of simple people, Wyclif earned his title of "father of English prose."

Wyclif's Bible.

The peasant rebellion and the Lollard agitation give us glimpses of an England which Chaucer, in spite of the manysidedness of his work, did not reveal. The Canterbury Tales contain only one reference to the plague, and only one to Lollardry; both of these references are casual and half-jesting. Chaucer wrote for the court and the cultivated classes, to whom the sufferings of the poor were either unknown, or accepted as a part of the natural order of things. He is often serious, sometimes nobly so; but intense moral indignation and exalted spiritual rapture were foreign to his artistic, gay, tolerant disposition. In his graceful worldliness, his delight in the bright pageantry of life, he shows the Norman-French strain; the other half of the English nature, its

Chaucer contrasted with Langland.

mystical, sombre, spiritually strenuous side, found expression in William Langland, author of the *Book concerning Piers the Plowman.* He proceeds from the Germanic strain in the nation, and is the representative of those moral and spiritual traits which afterward came to be known as Puritan.

Langland: his life and character.

All that we know of Langland he has told us himself, in the brief autobiographic hints contained in *Piers the Plowman.* He was born probably at Colesbury Mortimer, near Malvern in Worcestershire, not far from the Welsh border. He was of low birth, though a freeman. He tells us that "his father and friends" put him to school, and made a clerk of him. For a time he "romed about robed in russet," in the manner of a mendicant, driven by vague thoughts and desires. Going up to London, he got him a "chantry for souls," one of the minor offices of the mediæval Church; his duty being to chant at stated intervals for the release from purgatory of the soul of some dead man, who had left a bequest for that purpose. His *placebo* and his *dirige* and his "seven psalms" were the "tools," he says with a shade of self-contempt, by which he gained his bread. His poverty was extreme. With his wife Kitte and his daughter Calote, he lived in Cornhill, where his tall, gaunt figure, clothed in a sombre priestly cloak, got him the nickname of "Long Will." As he stalked through the crowded Strand, he would refuse to bow to fine lords and ladies clad in furs and silver, and to cry "God save you, sir!" to sergeants of the law. His conduct toward the rich and great, so unusual in that day, got him the name of an eccentric person, somewhat touched in the brain. Hints of mental struggles verging upon insanity occur in his confessions. "My wit waxed and waned," he says, "until I was a fool." A half-ferocious sincerity, a flaming indignation against the pretences and base complacencies of the world, combined with the abstraction and inward air of the visionary, must have made him a puzzling

and disconcerting personality, to those who thought of him as only one among the "lollares (*i.e.*, idlers) and lewd hermytes" of London. The last trace we get of him is in Bristol, where, in 1399, he was writing *Richard the Redeless*, a poem of protest and warning addressed to King Richard II. Apparently, news reached him of the assassination of the king and of the usurpation of the throne by Henry IV., and he threw the poem by unfinished. The date of his death is unknown.

His life-work was his great poem, *The Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman.* Into this he put all that he had to say upon the questions of the day, and upon the great questions of human life. He worked upon it for at least thirty years, constantly rewriting and expanding it. It exists in three versions, the first dating from about 1362, when Langland was thirty years old, the second from about 1377, the last completed after 1390, perhaps as late as 1398–99. In these rewritings and recastings it grew from eight cantos to twenty-three; and the conception of the chief character, Piers the Plowman, grew constantly more exalted. At first he is merely an honest, simple-hearted farmer, full of Christian helpfulness and practical justice. But in the later versions he is raised and glorified; and is conceived of mystically as Jesus Christ, incarnate in the form of a lowly tiller of the fields.

The Book of "Piers the Plowman."

Although called collectively a Vision, the poem really consists of a series of visions. The first, the Vision of the Field full of Folk, gives a view of the corruptions of the state and of the social body. On a May morning, on Malvern Hills, the poet, "weary forwandered," lies down to rest, and dreams. Beneath him, in the great plain, he sees gathered together a vast crowd of people, representing the manifold life of the world. All are busy, but their work is, with few exceptions, evil or futile. Some are sowing or ploughing, but only that idlers

Vision of the Field full of Folk.

may waste the fruit of their toil. Pilgrims are journeying to holy shrines, that they may "lie all their lives after;" minstrels and ribald story-tellers are plying their trade; friars and pardoners are abusing their priestly station for their own low ends. Law-sergeants, tradesmen, and taverners mix with the changing crowd, and contribute each his characteristic abuse. The genius of the crowd, the incarnation of the worldly spirit, is Lady Meed (Bribery), a wonderful allegorical figure, symbol of that self-seeking and dishonesty which Langland everywhere saw poisoning the springs of social and political life.

Vision of the Seven Deadly Sins.

In the next Vision, that of the Seven Deadly Sins and of Piers the Plowman, we are given a group of these allegorical abstractions, painted, however, with so much realism and graphic detail, that, like the abstract figures of Pilgrim's Progress, they seem as tangible and real as living beings, with whom, indeed, they mingle on equal terms. Among them is Piers, and to him they appeal to show them the way to Truth, *i.e.*, to God the Father. Piers knows Truth well, but refuses to go until he has ploughed his half-acre. All who come asking for guidance he sets to work. Many shirk their tasks, but are driven back by Hunger. As the first Vision gives a view of the corruptions of the state, and hints at their cause and remedy in the person of Lady Meed, so the second shows the individual sins of men, and preaches, as preparatory to personal salvation, the Gospel of Work,—the same gospel which Carlyle, who has many points of resemblance to Langland, was to preach five centuries afterward.

The later Visions attempt to set forth the true theory of moral action, and of the spiritual life. The poem reaches its highest point of imaginative intensity in the account of Piers's triumph over Death and Hell. He comes riding barefoot on an ass, without spurs or spear, to his "joust in Jerusalem." With the news of his triumph and

resurrection, the dreamer awakes in ecstasy, the joyous Easter bells pealing in his ears.

The name of Piers Plowman was used as a rallying cry in the peasant uprising; and the poem probably had much to do with forming Wyclif's evangelistic ideals, in his institution of the "poor priests." Langland's sense of the equality of all men before God, his hatred of social falsities and hypocrisies, his belief in the dignity of labor, give a modern tone to his poem, in spite of its archaic metrical form, and its mediæval machinery of abstract figures. His deep religious sense and the grandeur of his mystical imaginings are neither ancient nor modern, but of all time.

Spirit of Langland's Poem.

The metrical form which Langland chose, again contrasts him sharply with Chaucer. Chaucer threw in his lot from the first with the new versification imported from France, depending upon regular accent and rhyme; and he developed this in such a way as to bring out of it a rich and finished music. By his choice of the French system he put himself in line with the future evolution of English verse. Langland, either because he knew that his popular audience would be more deeply touched by the ancient and traditional rhythms of the race, or because these were more natural to himself, adopted the old system of native versification, which depended upon alliteration for ornament, and allowed great irregularity both in the position of stressed syllables and in the number of syllables in the line. The opening verses of the poem will serve as a specimen:

Its Metrical Form.

* In a sómer séson . whan sóft was the sónne,
I shope me in shroudes . as I a shepe were
In habit as an hermit . unholy of wórkes;
Went wide in this worlde . wóndres to here.

* The cæsura, or heavy pause in the middle of each line, is marked by a dot. The alliterative syllables, of which there are usually two in

This metre is, to a modern ear, somewhat monotonous and uncouth. It adapts itself much better to recitation than to private reading; and it is highly probable that Langland wrote with the expectation that his poetry would be chanted by minstrels in recitative, since the literature of the audience he addressed was chiefly disseminated in that way. However we account for it, the fact that the *Vision* is written in an antique and rapidly dying verse form, has told severely against it. From Chaucer flows the whole stream of later verse, as from a "well of English undefiled." Langland's poem had no literary offspring, unless its effect may be traced in the miracle and morality plays of the early drama. Its uncouthness, moreover, is not limited to its metre. As a whole it is confused in plan, bewildered with detail, full of breaks and rude transitions. Its total effect is majestic, because of the force of imagination behind it, but not artistic. It lacks the clear, firm outline, and the harmonious proportion, which Chaucer's supreme artistic sense enabled him to attain in his later years.

That Chaucer was far in advance of his time, becomes clear when we note how persistently his fifteenth century successors turned back to him for inspiration, as to their

Imitators of Chaucer and Gower.

"Fader dere and maister reverent,"

and found themselves unable to do more than awkwardly or pallidly imitate him. The chief among these imitators was John Lydgate, a monk of Bury St. Edmunds, who began making verses before Chaucer's death, and died before the outbreak of the Wars of the Roses. His *Story of Thebes*, based on Boccaccio and Statius, is told as one of the Canterbury Tales; the poet in his prologue feigns to have joined the pil-

Lydgate.

[1] * and one (sometimes two) in the second half, are stressed. lly four stresses in the line.

grims at Canterbury, and at the Host's request tells the story on the homeward journey. The device illustrates vividly the almost pathetic dependence of Lydgate and his brother poets upon their master. Lydgate's verse is markedly halting and tuneless. In this respect Thomas Occleve or Hoccleve (1370?–1450?) was a better disciple. He had the benefit of Chaucer's personal acquaintance and instruction, loved and mourned him deeply, and preserved, in the manuscript of his *Governail of Princes* (written for the Prince of Wales, afterward Henry V.), the well-known portrait of Chaucer as a gray-haired old man, hooded and gowned.

Occleve.

A third poet who continued the master's tradition (with a good sprinkling of Gower, to be sure) has lived in literary history as much by the picturesqueness of his personal story as by his poetry, which is nevertheless charming in its kind. This is the young Stuart prince, afterward James I. of Scotland, who was captured by English sailors in 1405, and spent the next nineteen years in England as a prisoner, in the Tower of London, Windsor Castle, and other strongholds. At the time of his capture he was a child of eleven. As he grew up in solitude, he turned for diversion to poetry and music,—arts in which the Scottish kings were traditionally proficient. One day, from the windows of Windsor Castle, he saw a beautiful young girl walking in the garden below, as Palamon saw the fair Emilie in the Knight's Tale. The story of his love for Jane Beaufort and its happy outcome, the young prince told with tenderness and fancy, in his *King's Quair*. It is written in the seven-line pentameter stanza* invented by Chaucer and repeatedly used by him, though, in deference to the princely poet, it has since been known as "rhyme royal." Both the style and plan of the *King's Quair* are imitated from the artificial French poetry from which Chaucer more and more departed as he grew

James I. of Scotland: the "King's Quair."

* Rhyming a, b, a, b, b, c, c.

in original power, but from which neither Gower nor the Chaucerian imitators delivered themselves. It is significant of the failure of these imitators to perceive the immense originality of Chaucer's later work, that they frequently put Gower on a level with him. In the Envoy of the *King's Quair*, James recommends his "litel boke, nakit of eloquence,"

> "Unto the ympnes (hymns) of my maisters dere,
> Gowere and Chaucere, that on steppis satt
> Of rhetorike whil they were lyvand here,
> Superlative as poets laureate,"

and he brings the poem to a close with a prayer that their souls may together enjoy the bliss of heaven. When, in 1424, the prince, on the eve of release from his long captivity, was married to the lady whom he had celebrated in the *King's Quair*, his reverence for Gower prompted him to have the wedding held in the church of St. Savior's, where the old poet lay buried.

This excessive reverence for the poets of a preceding age is one sign among many that the natural springs of poetry were dry. The fifteenth century is, in fact, a peculiarly barren one. Its most famous poet, Lydgate, seldom or never rose above mediocrity; and the thin stream of artificial love-poetry which flowed down into the troubled times of the Wars of the Roses, grew, after James I., less and less, until it lost itself in the sands.

Decay of Poetry in the Fifteenth Century.

In prose, however, the fifteenth century produced one work which has much of the elevation and imaginative splendor of great poetry, the *Morte D'Arthur* of Sir Thomas Malory. Malory was a knight, a gentleman of an ancient house, with its seat at Newbold Revell, Warwickshire.* As a young man he

Fifteenth Century Prose: Sir Thomas Malory.

* Who Was Sir Thomas Malory? by G. L. Kittredge. Reprinted from Vol. V. of Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature. Boston, 1897.

served in France, in the military retinue of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, a warrior in whom lived again the knightly ideal of a former age, and who was known by the romantic title of "Father of Courtesy." Such a lineage and training fitted Malory peculiarly for his task of combining in a great prose-poem the legends of King Arthur and the Round Table, which he gathered from Geoffrey of Monmouth and the French *trouvères*. By good fortune he was master of a simple, flowing English style, primitive in structure, but capable of considerable flexibility and falling into pleasant natural rhythms. The only example which he had for such a use as he made of the new English prose, was in the famous *Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, compiled in French by Jean de Bourgogne, and translated into English late in the fourteenth century. The translator of these fictitious Travels is unknown, but whoever he was, he threw his marvellous tales of giant sheep, human beings with dogs' faces, "anthropaphagi, and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders," into a simple, lucid prose, which, while lacking the terseness and energy of Wyclif's popular sermons, was the best instrument yet found for the journey-work of literature. This instrument Malory took up; but in response to the superior dignity and beauty of his subject, he raised it to a higher power. The Morte Darthur is the one great oasis in the literary desert of the fifteenth century. It was finished by 1470, but was not printed until 1485, when Caxton, the first English printer, published it with an interesting preface from his own hand.

CHAPTER IV

THE RENAISSANCE: NON-DRAMATIC LITERATURE TO THE DEATH OF SPENSER

THE literary decline following the death of Chaucer was due largely to political causes. The dispute in regard to the throne, which culminated in the Wars of the Roses, distracted the country, wasted its energy, and finally destroyed in large measure the noble families on whose patronage early literature and art were dependent. The accession of Henry VII. in 1485 brought about a period of quiet and recovery. As its power increased, the country resumed its position in the family of European nations, and began through them to feel the stimulus of the movement called the Renaissance.

Period of Decline after Chaucer.

The Renaissance was in essence an intellectual rebirth. It showed itself in the effort of the individual to free himself from the rigid institutions of the Middle Ages, feudalism and the Church; and to assert his right to live, to think, and to express himself as he pleased. As men gained this freedom they felt less inclined to assent to the mediæval view that this life should be sacrificed to the future; they turned more and more to the present world, to the problems of gaining mastery in it through wealth or statecraft, of discovering its secrets through exploration and scientific experiment, of heightening its enjoyments through art and literature.

The Renaissance.

One force of immense importance in the Renaissance was the new knowledge of the world of antiquity, which was obtained through the recovery of the writings and works of art of the classical period. The ideal presented in

the literatures of Athens and Rome, of life which should be lived for its present opportunities of human development, came to have a strong influence on men, —an influence denoted by the term *Humanism*, which was applied to the study of the classics. Moreover, the examples of perfection of form given by classical poets, orators, sculptors, and architects, became models on which the new taste for the beautiful formed itself. Naturally, Italy, as a seat of Roman civilization, possessed within herself a great store of the relics of the classical age, and was in the best position to receive more from the East. When the Turks conquered the Eastern Empire and captured Constantinople, in 1453, many Greek scholars betook themselves to Italy with their manuscripts; and in this way Italian cities became centres of Greek study, and of the classical culture or humanism in which the new intellectual impulse was nourished.

The Influence of the Classics.

With all these advantages, Italy became the teacher of Europe in philosophy, in art, and in classical scholarship. Other nations, however, supplied elements of the new world which was being created. Spain and Portugal gave the practical energy that sent Columbus to America, and Vasco da Gama around Africa. Germany contributed the invention of printing, by which the new civilization was diffused among the people; and Germany also took the lead in the movement which had for its object the emancipation of the conscience from the Church. A beginning had been made in this direction by Wyclif; but the great forward step was taken, when, in 1517, Luther nailed to the church door in Wittenberg, his attack upon the power of the Pope. It is true, this Reformation, as time went on, took the form of a moral reaction against the worldly spirit of the Renaissance; but in its largest aspect it made not only for the religious liberty of the individual, but also for general freedom of thought.

Elements in the Renaissance.

In the early Renaissance, we must think of England as lagging somewhat behind the more precocious nations, Italy and France. The English Renaissance can scarcely be said to begin until the reign of Henry VII., and it did not come to its full splendor until the latter days of Elizabeth. Even before the accession of Henry VII., however, we can discern signs of its coming. In 1476 Caxton set up his printing-press in London. Before this date one of the colleges at Oxford had engaged an Italian teacher of Greek; and in the next few years William Grocyn and Thomas Linacre went to Italy to study with the Italian humanists. They returned to give Oxford an international reputation as the home of Greek studies, so that the greatest scholar of the time, the Dutch Erasmus, came there to study, thinking it no longer necessary for young men to resort to Italy.

These men of the new learning, especially the younger generation, Erasmus and his friends John Colet and Thomas More, exemplify in memorable fashion the hopefulness and idealism that attended the early progress of the Renaissance. All three were reformers. Colet, who was afterward Dean of St. Paul's, set a model for the public school system of England, in his famous St. Paul's School. Erasmus sketched the character of the perfect ruler in his *Institutes of a Christian Prince;* and More that of a perfect society, in his *Utopia.* All three were interested in the reform of the Church, and though they did not follow Henry VIII. in his revolt against the Pope, they prepared the way for the later alliance between the universities and the English Reformation.

The Oxford Reformers.

Still more important than the universities as a centre of Renaissance influence, was the court. Both Henry VII. and Henry VIII. ruled in the spirit of modern statecraft. Both encouraged trade and manufactures, and increased the wealth of the country. Both set aside the relics of feudalism by allowing men of low birth to rise to distinction,

through personal service rendered to the sovereign. Thus the court became the field for the display of individual ambition. Henry VIII., indeed, in his own character resembled strongly some of the Italian princes of the Renaissance, who mingled the enlightenment of the statesman with the suspicious cruelty of the despot. The men who played for power in his service had need of the utmost address, in a game where the stakes were the highest, and defeat was fatal. In his fondness for art, learning, and magnificence, Henry exhibited the taste of the Renaissance. During his reign Italian architects built Hampton Court Palace, one of the best examples of English Renaissance or Tudor architecture; the German painter, Hans Holbein, came to England; the court took on an aspect of splendor in its dress, its entertainments, its manners.

The Court of Henry VIII.

The most attractive figure, both among the Oxford reformers and later at the court of Henry, is Sir Thomas More (1478–1535). Although More separated from his early companions and threw himself into practical affairs, he never lost interest in the intellectual movement of the time. His famous *Utopia* (1515–1516) is an account of an imaginary commonwealth in which the social wrongs of England under the Tudors were righted. It is the handbook of a statesman, and as such it is concerned with problems of the present; but still more it is a dream of the future, full of hopefulness and enthusiasm for the improvement of a whole nation and of human nature itself.

Sir Thomas More.

More's *Utopia* represents the Renaissance interest in the state as a work of art. A second interest, not less characteristic of the time, was that in the improvement of the individual by culture and education, which forms the subject of two essays by Roger Ascham (1515–1568), once the tutor of Queen Elizabeth. The first, called *Toxophilus* (1545), was ostensibly written in praise of archery; but it

is really a defence of a generally sound, healthy, well-balanced life. The second, *The Schoolmaster* (1570), sets forth the idea of education as a humanizing process in which the pupil must work with the teacher. Ascham was a scholar, and in his style as in his substance he marks the reverence for classical authority which followed the revival of learning. His purpose obliged him to choose English and to write simply, but he declares that it would have been easier for him to write in Latin. His view of life, however, is thoroughly English; he praises learning not for its own sake, but because it furnishes discipline for character and examples for conduct. For him the aim of life is social usefulness; the private virtues and the service of the individual to the state go hand in hand. "In very deed," he says, "the good or ill bringing up of children doth as much serve to the good or ill service of God, our Prince, and our whole countrie, as any one thing beside."

Roger Ascham.

Both More and Ascham are to be regarded as writers for the aristocracy. Popular literature gathered about the chief movement of the time among the people, the Reformation. The struggle for the emancipation of conscience from priestly control had begun in England nearly two centuries before, with Wyclif; and in spite of persecution the spirit of the Lollards had survived until the reign of Henry VIII. This spirit, strengthened by the example of the German and Swiss reformers, supplied the moral force which made Henry's political separation from Rome in 1534, on account of his first divorce, an opportunity for a real reformation. This force went out through the country in the sermons of Hugh Latimer, the boldest among Henry's reforming bishops, and the most powerful preacher of the day. He was of peasant birth; and his writings represent a development of popular English prose, straightforward, racy, simple as homespun. His style shows the effect of the strongest and most widely dif-

The English Reformation.

fused of the literary influences of the time, the translation of the Bible by William Tyndale and Miles Coverdale (1526–1538), of which the popular character is shown by the fact that ninety-seven per cent. of the words are Anglo-Saxon. A union between the Latin-English style of the educated classes and the simple every-day speech of the people is shown by another literary monument of the Reformation, the Book of Common Prayer, prepared by Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury under Henry VIII. and Edward VI. Here the sonorous Latin words, full of suggestion for the lover of the classics, are often followed by their Anglo-Saxon equivalents, the sentences falling with a rhythm which is in part caught from Hebrew poetry, in part, perhaps, from the artificial style which foreign models had introduced into England.

While English prose was thus developing to express the ideas of the time on the two important subjects, culture and religion, poetry was also taking its modern form. The last poet of the old school of imitators of Chaucer was John Skelton. Toward the close of his life, however, he broke away from the tradition of his youth, and adopted a rough, short metre, adapted to the energy of his satire, which sounded the popular cry against abuses in church and state. In his harshness and meagreness he affords a striking contrast to two poets of the close of Henry's reign, who relieved the poverty of English verse with forms imported from Italy, and thus began modern English poetry—Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503–1542) and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517–1547).

The New Poetry.

The career of the former illustrates particularly the value to English literature of the close connection with foreign countries, which Henry VIII.'s ambition to take part in European affairs did much to restore. Wyatt was frequently abroad on diplomatic missions; like Chaucer he visited Italy, and also Spain and France. His poems are, for the most part, transla-

Sir Thomas Wyatt.

tions and imitations of forms characteristic of Italian poetry, especially the love sonnet, of which Petrarch in his sonnets to Laura had given the chief examples. With Petrarch's imitators the sonnet had become a merely literary exercise, devoted to the expression of a love which might be entirely imaginary, or directed toward an imaginary person. Wyatt's sonnets, therefore, like those of his Italian masters, need not be regarded as having strict biographical truth, though attempts have been made to find in them the history of a personal relation, and some have guessed that they were inspired by Henry's second queen, Anne Boleyn. At all events Wyatt's poetry suggests that even a conventional form was for him the means for a sincere expression of feeling; even his translations seem charged with his own temperament, and his rendering of the Penitential Psalms is touched with personal religious emotion. Wyatt's effort to achieve the regularity and finish of his Italian models was not always successful; he makes bad rhymes, he fails to harmonize word and verse accent, he stumbles in scansion. Yet such poems as "Awake my Lute" and "Forget not yet," are eminent examples of lyrical power.

The Earl of Surrey.

Wyatt's companion poet, Surrey, born in 1517, and beheaded in 1547, was younger than his master both in years and in spirit. In contrast to Wyatt's gravity he has all the exuberance of the age, a perpetual charm of youth and promise, as his brilliant figure passes through the sunlight and shadow of Henry's court, moving gracefully and carelessly to the scaffold which awaited him. Like Wyatt he imitated the Italian amorous poets; but more significant than his love poems are those of friendship, the sonnets to Clere and to Wyatt, and the elegy on the Duke of Richmond, which are full of feeling, intimate, personal, sincere. Often, as, for example, in the youthful poem which begins "The soote season," he shows an interest in nature, and a realism

in picturing it, which are, for the time, quite extraordinary.

Surrey, however, like Wyatt, rendered his chief service to English literature, by enriching its resources with foreign forms, and especially by his introduction of blank verse, in his translation of two books of the *Æneid*. Blank verse had been used in Italy a few years before in a translation of the same work, so that Surrey did not originate the form; but the happy skill with which he adapted it, and thus discovered to English poetry its most powerful and characteristic verse form, is worthy of all praise. Indeed, Surrey's greatness is that of artistic common-sense. He had wit to see the value of foreign forms which were applicable to the English tongue. In those which he chose he made such changes as were necessary to adapt them still further to English requirements. The English sonnet which Shakespeare used, consisting of four quatrains and a couplet, was Surrey's adaptation. He did his work rapidly and instinctively; he had no time for long labors of experiment, for wavering uncertainty between the merits of rival forms. He was primarily not a man of letters, but a man of action, a soldier. With singular freedom from hesitation or misgiving, with the happy guess of a man accustomed to succeed, he picked out his weapon from the score which offered, fitted it to his hand, and in a few rapid passes showed his followers its use.

Poetry in the age of Henry VIII. was usually intended for private circulation in manuscript form. By the middle of the century, however, there had grown up a demand on the part of the reading public which publishers attempted to supply by volumes of miscellaneous verse. The first of these collections, *Tottel's Miscellany*, which contained the poems of Wyatt, Surrey, and several of their followers, appeared in 1557, a date which marks the public beginning of modern English verse.

"Tottel's Miscellany."

The influence of the new poetry is shown by a volume published a few years after *Tottel's Miscellany,* called *The Mirror for Magistrates.* This work in general character looks back to an older fashion, being a continuation of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes;* but it contains some excellent modern poetry in the "Induction" and "The Complaint of the Duke of Buckingham." These were written by Thomas Sackville (1536–1608), afterward Lord Buckhurst, who also wrote, in collaboration with Thomas Norton, the first regular English tragedy, *Gorboduc* (see p. 96). Both in his contributions to "The Mirror," which are in Chaucer's seven-line stanza, and in *Gorboduc,* which is in blank verse, Sackville shows surprising mastery of his form. He has a sureness of touch and a freedom from technical errors, which put him beyond Surrey and Wyatt; and his imaginative energy is suggestive of the great poets who were to follow.

Thomas Sackville.

Except for the three poets mentioned, however, it is a matter of remark that English literature through the reign of Henry VIII. and the greater part of the reign of Elizabeth, gives little promise of the outburst which was to mark the closing years of the century. That outburst was the result of a sudden, overwhelming enthusiasm in which the whole nation shared. The accession of Elizabeth, in 1558, dispersed the threatening clouds of civil and religious war that had been gathering during the reigns of Edward and Mary. The force of the Renaissance, which had been checked for a time by national hesitation, manifested itself anew and more widely. Many things combined to give individual distinction to character, and variety and color to life. The enlarged possibilities of the world, the new lands beyond the sea, offered unlimited opportunity for action. The diffusion of knowledge of the past, together with the freedom of thought which the Reformation had brought about, afforded opportunities as tempting for speculative enterprise and imaginative ad-

The Age of Elizabeth.

venture. Altogether there appeared to men a new, wider, richer world; and with it came a clearer consciousness of the individual personality which that world seemed made to satisfy. This discovery of the new world and of man, as it has been called, coming to the nation in the time of joyful reaction from the uncertainty and peril of Mary's reign, set the whole mass into vibration; but the tendencies which made for purely personal aggrandizement were both directed and kept in check by the growth of national consciousness. Elizabeth's reign united the nation, and her personal presence gave it a visible sign of unity. Under her rule England passed through an experience as dramatic as that of Athens at Marathon; after a long period of suspense the strain was relieved by the wonderful repulse of the Spanish Armada in 1588. The national feeling, made so intense by danger and victory, shines through the literature of the time. The eager, instinctive patriotism of the people found utterance in the choruses of Shakespeare's *Henry V.* The more conscious political virtue, which touched with something of high purpose the lives of Sidney, of Sackville, even of Essex and Raleigh, is reflected in Spenser's *Faerie Queene.*

For reasons given in the next chapter, the drama was the most broadly popular and spontaneous expression of the many-sided life of the time. Compared with this, the natural language of the English people, the other forms of literature seem unvital. Yet it must be remembered that many of the interests of the Renaissance were not matters of direct popular feeling, but of conscious cultivation. And again, the drama was the only form in which the Elizabethan was at all sure of his art. In other kinds of writing he was an experimenter, a learner. To this fact we must attribute much of that artificiality which makes Elizabethan non-dramatic literature difficult to read, especially the prose of Lyly, Sidney, and their followers.

Elizabethan Literature.

John Lyly (1553–1606) was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he seems to have gained the reputation of being a trifler—"the fiddlestick of Oxford," an enemy called him. His superficial cleverness, however, enabled him to write a successful account of the culture of the period, in *Euphues or the Anatomy of Wit* (1579), and its sequel, *Euphues and his England* (1580).

John Lyly.

Euphues is a work of fiction in which an exceedingly slight plot serves to connect a succession of conversations, letters, and essays, treating such subjects as love, education, religion, and manners. It illustrates the interest of the time in intellectual development, restrained, however, by the feeling that "vain is all learning without the taste of divine knowledge." Still more important than its relation to private morals, was its influence as a manual of public and social conduct. It set both a fashion of speech, and a code of manners; a dialect and an etiquette for court usage. However indirect, wasteful, and artificial this fashion now appears, it was in its time an evidence and a cause of refinement. One of the distinguishing accomplishments of the Renaissance was the elevation of social life into a fine art; and of this result in England *Euphues* was the chief sign.

"Euphues."

The artificial language which Euphues and his friends used, and which became a literary fashion, is the characteristic of the book for which it is remembered to-day. Among Lyly's mannerisms the most remarkable is the arrangement of words in antithesis, the contrast being marked by alliteration, thus: "Although I have *shrined* thee in my heart for a *trusty friend*, I will *shunne* thee hereafter as a *trothless foe*." Another peculiarity is his lavish use of similes drawn from what passed for natural history, as: "The milk of the Tygresse, that the more salt there is thrown into it the fresher it is." Euphuism was but one form of a widely diffused tendency in Renaissance literature, an attempt to

Euphuism.

prove the artistic value of prose by giving it some of the qualities of poetry. Earlier writers than Lyly, Ascham and Cranmer, had shown traces of it; and English prose did not escape from its influence until well on in the next century. In Lyly's own generation, which was distinguished for its interest in all sorts of artistic experiments, other forms of this tendency appeared, notably that introduced by the most charming and the most forceful of the literary dilettantes of the age, Sir Philip Sidney.

Philip Sidney was born in 1564, of one of the most distinguished families in England. He was sent to Shrewsbury school and to Oxford; and then spent some time abroad, in Paris, Vienna, and Italy, whence he returned to Elizabeth's court. There he represented the more splendid and elevated political conceptions of the time. His uncle, the Earl of Leicester, was the political chief of the Puritan party, which favored committing England to a definite alliance with the Protestant states of Europe; and in furtherance of this policy Sidney was sent on a mission to Germany in 1577. He was also eagerly interested in the development of English power on the sea. In 1583 he got a grant of land in America, and two years later he made an unsuccessful attempt to escape from court and join Sir Francis Drake in one of his half-piratical expeditions against the Spaniards. This same year he accompanied the English army which was sent to help the Dutch Protestants against Spain; and in 1586 he fell in a skirmish at Zutphen.

Sir Philip Sidney.

Sidney's name, more than any other, stands for the greatness of national and personal ideals which we traditionally associate with the age of Elizabeth. It is, therefore, somewhat disappointing to find his writing less eminent than his life. It must be remembered, however, that Sidney, like most men of position of his age, wrote not for the public but for himself and for a few friends. His works were published first in pirated editions, the

Arcadia in 1590, and *Astrophel and Stella* in 1591. The latter is a collection of songs and sonnets, evidently addressed to one person, Lady Penelope Devereux, afterward Lady Rich. Sidney and Lady Penelope had been betrothed when the latter was a child. For some reason the match was broken off, and Lady Penelope married Lord Rich, with whom she lived for a while most unhappily. Whether Sidney actually loved her, when it was too late, or whether he wrote love sonnets as a literary exercise, addressing them to his old friend out of compliment and sympathy, it is impossible to say. On the one hand there is in his sonnets much of the conventional material of the Italian sonneteers; but on the other there are touches so apt to the situation of a man who loves too late, that one hesitates to ascribe them to mere dramatic skill. In none of the many sonnet cycles of the age, except Shakespeare's and Spenser's, do we find so much that has the stamp of personality upon it; surely in none except these, so much that has the accent of great poetry.

"Astrophel and Stella."

Sidney's chief literary adventure was the *Arcadia*, which he began in 1580, when, in consequence of a quarrel with the Earl of Oxford, he was in temporary disgrace and banishment from court. The writing of the *Arcadia* was merely a summer pastime, undertaken to please the Countess of Pembroke, Sidney's sister. The form of the work was suggested by romances, popular in Italy and in Spain, in which the scenes are laid in a pastoral country like the ancient Arcadia. The prose tale is interrupted at intervals by passages of verse, or eclogues, in which the shepherds sing of love and the delights of rural life. This form of literature had an immense charm for countries which were becoming a little weary of the activity of the early Renaissance; and Sidney himself, in his banishment from court, doubtless felt the influence of this mood. It was, however, a passing one, for Sid-

The "Arcadia."

ney was essentially a man of action; and his story, which begins in thoroughly pastoral fashion, quickly changes to a kind of romance of chivalry set in an arcadian landscape.

In his attempt at enrichment of style, Sidney worked as consciously as Lyly. He frequently uses the antithesis and other mechanical devices, but his chief resource is in prodigality of ornament and elaboration of figure. For example, one character is besought "to keep her speech for awhile within the paradise of her mind." Others are said to be "getting the pure silver of their bodies out of the ore of their garments." This boldness of metaphor is characteristic of the spirit of the book. Sidney spins his tale with a pure love for it, with the enthusiasm that he might have thrown into a buccaneering expedition to the Indies, if fortune had been kind to him; and this is the real source of such pleasure as we feel today in reading the *Arcadia*. His delight in his work is perfect, and gives to the book its exuberance, its fulness, its color. His style is whimsical and variable, epigrammatic and exhaustive by turns; now conscientious and dull, again full of the daring and passion of poetry.

The Style of the "Arcadia."

The verse passages which divide the several books of the *Arcadia* are interesting for their attempts at imitation of various classical and Italian forms. Sidney was, in verse as in prose, an amateur and an experimenter. He, with Sir Edward Dyer and others, formed a club called the Areopagus, of which the object was to cultivate Latin metres to the exclusion of the rhyming verse natural to the English tongue. This attempt was in line with similar undertakings in France and Italy, and serves to show how strong and how dangerous an influence the revival of learning exerted upon the beginnings of modern literature.

Sidney's Literary Theories.

Sidney subsequently shook himself partly free from such artistic vagaries. In 1579 Stephen Gosson published a

pamphlet called *The School of Abuse*, in which, as a Puritan, he attacked the art of the age, especially the drama.

Sidney replied with his *Defence of Poesie* in 1581. In this, one of the earliest pieces of English criticism, Sidney showed his classicism by his approval of plays built on the Latin model; but he defended English poetry, even of the native ballad sort, exclaiming, "I never heard the old song of 'Percy and Douglas' that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet."

"The Defence of Poesie."

The style of *The Defence of Poesie* is much more workmanlike than that of the *Arcadia*, but it was the latter which became an influence upon English prose. Sidney's *Arcadia* and Lyly's *Euphues* were the two popular books of the time, and they were naturally the models for authors who depended upon the reading public. Apart from the writers who gathered about the court,—amateurs like Sidney, or those who, like Spenser, looked for support to the patronage of the rich and preferment from the Queen,—there appeared in the reign of Elizabeth a group of men who lived directly on their literary earnings. These latter were often men of university education, who had lost caste. As a class they showed the intense desire for sensual enjoyment, the violence of passion, the impatience of restraint, social or moral, that accompanied the assertion of individuality in the Renaissance. The irregularity of their lives, which ended often in misery or disgrace, has made them the heroes of stories famous among the tragedies of literature. Marlowe was stabbed to death in a tavern brawl; Peele died of dissipation; Greene, as the story goes, from surfeiting; and Nash, we are told, of starvation.

The Popular Writers.

Such men turned chiefly to the theatre, as the most profitable market for literature; but they have left also a large body of miscellaneous writings, fiction, biography, pamphlets. They were not experimenters and innovators like

Sidney and his circle, but they were quick to test any literary theory or form by its adaptability to popular taste. Robert Greene (1560–1592) began his career by imitating Lyly, in a number of Euphuistic romances. After the *Arcadia* had begun to circulate in manuscript, he wrote *Menaphon* (1589), a pastoral tale in which he clearly imitated Sidney's style. His most individual work is in the partly autobiographic tales, *Greene's Repentance* and *A Groat's Worth of Wit*, in which he drew from his own life lessons of morality, possibly with a view to the increasing importance of the Puritan part of the reading public. Thomas Nash (1567–1600) was the journalist of the group. His pamphlets represent the interest of the public in questions such as the authority of the bishops, and in private scandal such as gathered about the life of his friend Robert Greene. His work was, in the main, ephemeral. He is chiefly remembered for his story *Jack Wilton*, in which the tricks and adventures of an English boy on the continent are described, with fictitious references to historical events and persons. Another writer who for some years belonged to the crew of literary adventurers, was Thomas Lodge (1558–1625); his romance, *Rosalynde* (1590), (which furnished the story of *As You Like It*) is the most perfect bit of fiction of the time. In his sub-title *Euphues' Golden Legacy*, Lodge recognized his obligations to Lyly; but his style is far less artificial than that of his prototype, and the exquisite pastoral setting (preserved by Shakespeare in his Forest of Arden) is to be set down rather to Sidney's influence. Lodge, in a greater degree than Greene and Nash, had the lyrical gift which few writers of the time were wholly without. His highest fame is as the writer of the exquisite songs with which he interspersed his romances. Such lyrics as "Love in my bosom like a bee" and "Like to the clear in highest sphere," from *Rosalynde*, show both the native power of the singer and the refinement of the artist.

Greene, Nash, and Lodge.

These writers represent the eccentric, ornamented, often loosely constructed prose of the Renaissance; a prose which was to be carried on by the writers of the next generation, and to become the typical style of the seventeenth century. Beside them, however, must be mentioned a writer who stands for a saner, more intellectual development of literary style. During the later years of Elizabeth's reign, the country was distracted by a dispute carried on between the bishops on the one hand, and on the other the Puritan party which denied their authority. This dispute soon passed the bounds of literary controversy; and the refusal of the Puritans to attend the services of the Church of England, and the efforts of the government to compel them, made the matter one of politics. Before the break was irreparable, however, the argument for the authority of the Church was stated with winning eloquence by

Richard Hooker.

Richard Hooker (1553–1600) in his *Ecclesiastical Polity*, four books of which were published in 1594, a fifth in 1597, and three more after the author's death. As befits the subject, Hooker's prose is grave and regular, with something of the precision of classic style, as opposed to the wilfulness and unconventionality of Sidney's romantic manner. Indeed, Hooker was, at the end of the sixteenth century, as was Dryden at the end of the seventeenth, a writer who developed a very competent form of English prose to fulfil a serious intellectual purpose. Unlike Dryden, however, he did not make his example of decisive force in determining the practice of his successors.

The development of a great prose literature in England was reserved for a later century; the chief glory of the English Renaissance was its poetry. The experiments and studies in foreign forms, made by Wyatt and Surrey, were the preparation for a period of wonderful poetic achievement, in which two names stand clearly first. As in the drama there rises above earlier and later playwrights the

single surpassing figure of Shakespeare, so in non-dramatic poetry stands pre-eminent Edmund Spenser, the poet of *The Faerie Queene.*

Spenser was born in London in 1552. He was sent to the Merchant Tailors' School, and then to Pembroke College, Cambridge, where he took his master's degree in 1576. He then spent some time in the north of England. In 1578, however, he was in London, in attendance on the Earl of Leicester, seeking to establish himself through the influence of his friends at court. After the publication of his *Shepherd's Calendar,* in 1579, preferment came to him in the shape of an appointment in Ireland, as secretary to the deputy, Lord Grey de Wilton. In Ireland Spenser was given office, and was granted, among other estates, the Manor of Kilcolman, whither Sir Walter Raleigh came in 1589 to visit him. Raleigh saw the first three books of *The Faerie Queene;* and under his advice Spenser went to London in the following year, to read them to the Queen and to publish them. The success of the poem was immediate, but the reward from the Queen, in whose honor it was written, was disappointingly small. Soon after its publication Spenser put forth a volume of poems styled *Complaints.* The circumstances of his journey to London he related, after his return to Ireland, in *Colin Clout's Come Home Again,* in which he resumed the pastoral style of *The Shepherd's Calendar.* In the next few years Spenser was busy with his courtship and marriage, which are beautifully commemorated in the sonnet series, the "Amoretti," and in his wedding song, or "Epithalamion." He went to London again in 1596 to publish the second three books of *The Faerie Queene.* During this visit he wrote the "Hymn of Heavenly Love," and "Hymn of Heavenly Beauty," to accompany two earlier "Hymns in Honor of Love and Beauty." He also wrote in London the most exquisite of his shorter poems, the "Prothalamion." Soon after his return to Kilcolman,

Edmund Spenser.

there broke out one of those frequent insurrections which marked British rule in Ireland. Spenser's castle, which stood in the path of the storm, was sacked and burned. He fled with his family to London, where, in 1599, he died in poverty.

Spenser's life was spent chiefly in three places, each of which left strong marks upon his character and work,—Cambridge, London, and Ireland. At Cambridge he found the learning of the Renaissance, especially the philosophy of Plato, which appears clearly in *The Faerie Queene* and in the "Hymns." Here also he came to know the literature of France and Italy; his first published work consisted of translations from Petrarch and the French poet du Bellay. At Cambridge, also, he came into contact with the literary theories of the time; one of which was the idea put forward by Sidney and his friends, that English verse should be written according to Latin rules of prosody. This subject is discussed at length in the letters which passed between Spenser, after he removed to London, and his Cambridge friend, Gabriel Harvey. Spenser was too genuine a poet to be injured by such theories, but the influence of the environment where they were rife is seen in his scrupulous attention to the technical requirements of his art.

Spenser at Cambridge.

Of this Cambridge period the typical product is *The Shepherd's Calendar*, a series of twelve pastoral poems or eclogues. The eclogue in general was a poem of pastoral life, in which shepherds were the speakers, rural nature and love their usual themes. The poet might introduce matter personal to himself or his friends, or might even discuss political affairs, but he kept the conventional framework of the pastoral. In Spenser's fifth eclogue, for example, Archbishop Grindal figures as the good shepherd Algrind. The poems of *The Shepherd's Calendar* show much variety in metre, for Spenser was clearly practising and experimenting. But

"The Shepherd's Calendar."

most remarkable among their literary qualities is the diction, which he elaborated for himself with the design of giving a suggestion of antiquity and rusticity to his writing. This curious predilection for obsolete or coined words is characteristic of the artificial style affected by the age. It is carried so far in *The Faerie Queene* that Ben Jonson could say of Spenser that he "writ no language."

In London Spenser was at the centre of the thrilling national life of England. Through Leicester and Sidney he was introduced to the two leading political conceptions of the time, England's leadership of the Protestant cause in Europe against Spain and Rome, and her expansion beyond the seas; ideas that were the result partly of fantastic chivalry, and partly of a broad view of world politics. Finally, in Ireland he saw the English race in passionate conflict with opposing forces. The chronically disturbed state of the country was aggravated by the intrigues of Philip of Spain and the Pope with the Irish chieftains, provoking those revolts which Lord Grey, strong in his belief that the Irish were the foes of God and of civilization, put down with savage fury. Naturally, Spenser's residence in Ireland, by bringing him into actual conflict with evil, stimulated his moral enthusiasm. Out of the conception of the greatness of England's mission, which Spenser found in London and struggled to realize in Ireland, and out of his chivalric devotion to this ideal, and to the Queen who typified it, grew *The Faerie Queene.* It is the brightest expression of the ideal morality of the time; and in a sense is the epic of the English race at one of the great moments of its history.

Spenser in London and Ireland.

Spenser and his contemporaries regarded moral purpose as essential to the greatest art; and with Spenser this purpose took the form of dealing with the old problem of the Renaissance—individual character in relation to the state. As he explains in his introductory letter to Raleigh, *The Faerie Queene* was to show forth the character of an ideal

knight, in twelve books, each devoted to one of the twelve qualities of perfect chivalry. This exposition of private virtue was to be followed by a second poem, which should portray the virtues of the ideal knight as governor. In fact, Spenser wrote only six books, each of twelve cantos; and a fragment of a seventh. The first is given to the Red Cross Knight, who represents Holiness; the second to Sir Guyon, or Temperance; the third to Britomarte, or Chastity; the fourth to Cambel and Triamond, or Friendship; the fifth to Sir Artegall, or Justice; the sixth to Sir Calidore, or Courtesy. These knights, as we learn from Spenser's introductory letter, are despatched on their various quests by Gloriana, Queen of Fairyland. In the course of their adventures appears from time to time the perfect knight, Arthur, who is himself in search of the Faerie Queene. The thread of the narrative is much interrupted by episodes, some of which, like the account of the Marriage of the Thames and the Medway, in Book IV., are, perhaps, insertions, poems which were written separately and forced into the scheme of the great work when Spenser needed a canto to fill out his number. Thus it appears that the author took no very strict view of the structure of his poem. Moreover, the allegory, which should give unity to the whole, is inconsistent and complicated. It takes at times a political turn, and the characters, besides representing ideal qualities, refer directly to actual persons. Spenser explained: "In that Faery Queene I meane glory in my generall intention, but in my particular I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of our soveraine the Queene." Belphœbe and Britomarte also represent Elizabeth; Arthur is Leicester; the false lady Duessa is Mary Queen of Scots. In the fifth book the political state of Europe is presented at length, with Lord Grey as Artegall, France as Flourdelis, Henry IV. as Burbon, Holland as Belge, and Philip II. of Spain as Grantorto. This was but natural in an age in which politics were largely

The Structure of "The Faerie Queene."

a matter of religion, and in which public and private conduct, as typified by Sidney, Raleigh, and Essex, was still touched with something of the glamour of the chivalry which had passed away.

The moral seriousness which underlies the poem marks the great difference between *The Faerie Queene* and its Italian prototype. Spenser, like Wyatt and Surrey, was content to go to school to Italy; and he chose as the model for his great work the *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto. Both Ariosto and Spenser deal with chivalry; but while Ariosto had merely the delight of the artist in the brilliant color which chivalry gave to life, with the easy contempt of the cynic for its moral pretensions, Spenser found in its persons and ideals a means of making goodness attractive. Ariosto pictures chivalric action because it is dramatic and exciting, not because he believes in it. Spenser deals with action because he must. His world is one which, according to the Platonic conception, is capable of being brought into harmony with an ideal. Naturally, to him the virtues which make for the effectiveness of the individual and the progress of the race, are of supreme importance; and the opposing vices, idleness, gluttony, lechery, and above all despair, are the objects of his fiercest attack.

Spenser and Ariosto.

In details Spenser learned much from Ariosto; many passages he wrote in avowed imitation. His prevailing difference is in the greater richness and elaboration of his style, of which the verse form of *The Faerie Queene,* the Spenserian stanza, is typical. Ariosto wrote in *ottava rima,* that is, in stanzas of eight lines rhyming thus: abababcc. Spenser on this suggestion built a more complicated stanza of his own, with rhymes arranged thus, ababbcbcc, the last line being an Alexandrine, or line of six feet. The brilliancy of the invention is shown by the fact that it adapts itself readily to the different demands of narrative, descriptive, and moral poetry; and that the poem sustains itself

The Spenserian Stanza.

throughout its great length with very little effect of sameness.

For the rest, Spenser has the great gift of the poet, the power to create the illusion of a different world, a world of magic where the imagination and the senses are satisfied. With all his morality, Spenser shared in the rich sensuous life which the Renaissance had thrown open to men. This immediate reliance upon the senses is one of the elements of reality which give greatness to his poem. *The Faerie Queene* is a long procession of figures, brilliant, fantastic, or terrible, which singly or in groups pass across an ever varying, ever wonderful landscape. And almost as marked as his feeling for form and color, is his use of sound. His sensitiveness of ear is shown by the melody of his verse, so constant yet so varied; but there are also many passages in which he makes the music of nature an element of pleasure in his palace of art, notably in the description of the Bower of Bliss, in Book II., Canto XII. And more poignant sensuous appeal is not lacking. Altogether, Spenser has the resources of the whole world of sensation at command, and he never fails to heighten them with the illusions of his art. Of the color, the savor, the music of life, his poem is full,—only the color is brighter, the taste sweeter, the music grander, than any which it is given to mortal senses to know.

Spenser's Art.

And this world of imagined splendor is presented as the background of a steadily growing idea of righteousness, of heroic goodness. The union of the two elements, sensuous and moral, seems at times to involve a naïve inconsistency. But Spenser belonged to an age when it seemed not impossible that there should be some common ground between the spirit of the Reformation and that of humanism. He was perhaps a Puritan; but more fortunate than Milton, he came before Puritanism had narrowed its view of life to the single issue of salvation. There is indeed in Spenser, as in many of his contem-

His Morality.

poraries, a note of melancholy, which suggests that the eternal contradiction of the joy of the present life by the threat of its hereafter, was not unheard. The flowers are already lightly touched by the frost. But this reminder that the time of free delight in the world of sense was so short, its sunshine so threatened by the clouds of Puritanism, makes its most signal product the more precious.

Spenser's latent Puritanism can be traced in the reserve with which he usually treats passion. A franker, more unrestrained abandonment to sensuous feeling of every kind marks such poems as Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, and Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, in which the tide of the Renaissance in England reaches its height. Marlowe died before he could complete the poem, which was finished by George Chapman (1559–1634). **George Chapman.** Chapman was one of the most considerable literary men of the time. His appearance as a poet was somewhat late, his first important work being Ovid's *Banquet of Sense*, 1595. Three years later he published the last four books of *Hero and Leander*. His famous translation of the *Iliad* he completed in 1611, and the *Odyssey* two years later. Long before this, in 1595, he had begun to write for the stage, his great work being a series of tragedies on subjects drawn from the history of France during the time of Catherine de Medici's influence. These, however, in spite of their dramatic form, are to be regarded as poems rather than plays.

In his poetry, both original and translated, Chapman is rather a man of the succeeding age than an Elizabethan. In him the fulness and splendor of Elizabethan poetry, which had reached their height in Spenser, tend to elaboration, conceit, and obscurity, faults which unfortunately mar the greatest of his works, the translation of Homer. For the *Iliad* he chose the old English ballad metre, written in couplets, of which one line has six feet and the next seven. The sustained movement of this measure gives it a certain like-

ness to Homer's hexameters; but, on the other hand, its facility and informality tend to produce a jog-trot familiarity in place of Homer's rapidity and nobility. Moreover, Chapman is deliberately indirect and fanciful, where Homer is direct and simple. Nevertheless, it was a circumstance almost as fortunate in its way for the English people as the series of happy accidents by virtue of which the English Bible became great literature, that the first translation of the noblest poetry of antiquity should have been made by one who, in spite of all his failings, was a true poet.

Chapman's Homer.

Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, and Marlowe's and Chapman's *Hero and Leander*, are perhaps the only long poems of the Elizabethan period which are still read. For the poets of that day, keenly interested as they were in artistic problems, failed to solve the most essential of them; they never separated the proper subject matter of poetry from that of prose. They gave verse form not only to history, but also to politics, philosophy, geography, and science. Accordingly many of them, in spite of genuine poetic gift, have all but disappeared from view, hopelessly distanced in the race for immortality by reason of their bulk of unpoetical material. One of these leviathans is Michael Drayton (1563–1631). He devoted himself largely to history, his most characteristic work being his *Baron's Wars*, an account of the deposition of Edward II. and the subsequent fall of Mortimer. Drayton was capable of gaining a genuine inspiration from history, as is shown by his superb "Ballad of Agincourt," the ringing metre of which is preserved in Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade." Unfortunately he is known not by this spirited lyric, but as the author of *Polyolbion*, a huge poem in Alexandrines, containing a descriptive geography of England. Like Drayton, Samuel Daniel (1562–1619) served the historical muse, but he wrote also a poem called *Musophilus*, or "A general defence of all learning."

Other Poets.

Among other curiosities of poetic treatment are William Warner's *Albion's England;* Lord Brooke's *Poems of Monarchy* and *Treatise on Religion;* Sir John Davies's *Nosce Teipsum,* a poem on the immortality of the soul, and *Orchestra,* a description of the motions of the universe under the figure of dancing.

It is not of these works, however, that we think when we speak of the glory of Elizabethan verse, but of the lyric quality which in nearly all the poets of the time flows somewhere as a stream of living water, making glad even the waste places of their greater works. Almost every poet of note published his cycle of love songs and sonnets; besides Shakespeare's, Spenser's, and Sidney's sonnets, there are Constable's *Diana,* Daniel's *Delia,* Drayton's *Idea,* Lodge's *Phyllis.* There were also frequent publications of collections of songs by miscellaneous writers, such as the *Phoenix Nest, England's Helicon,* and the *Poetical Rhapsody.* The dramas of the period abound in lyrical interludes, and the stories are interrupted by eclogues and songs. Indeed it may be said that the writer, whether of prose or verse, who was altogether without the lyrical impulse, was an exception.

Sonnets and Lyrics.

Many of the fugitive lyrics of the period are of doubtful attribution or altogether anonymous, but of the songs that can be assigned to any one writer a large share belongs to Thomas Campion (1540–1613). Campion's verse is practically and honestly adapted to musical requirements, for the Elizabethan poet, more naïve than his successors, always conceived of a song as a thing to be sung. Like many of his contemporaries, Campion was stirred to rapture alike by sacred and profane love. Indeed, one of the peculiarities of the Elizabethan lyric poets is their mingling of sensuousness and piety,—the latter not induced by fear of death, but by a trust in the Creator as frank and honest as was their delight in the world which He had made.

Thomas Campion.

How common was the lyrical gift in the last years of Elizabeth's reign, is shown by the number of men of action who were also poets. The group of literary courtiers, of whom Sidney was the chief, included a name as famous as his, that of Sir Walter Raleigh (1552–1618). Raleigh's place in literature belongs to him chiefly through his *History of the World*, one of the monuments of English prose in the next century; but the fragment of a long poem, *Cynthia*, the sonnet introductory to *The Faerie Queene*, and various tags of verse like the reply to Marlowe's "Come live with me and be my Love," and "The Lie," show that he possessed, in the words of a critic of the time, a vein of poetry "most lofty, insolent, and passionate." The tone of his poetry is on the whole singularly gloomy and bitter. His verses commemorate, for the most part, times of reaction and trouble in his checkered life, when he was thrown back by failure on the scepticism, distrust, and contempt, that were fundamental in his nature.

The Courtly Poets.

Raleigh's rival both in glory and in misfortune, the Earl of Essex, the brother of Sidney's Stella, was himself a poet. Another member of the group of courtly poets was Sir Edward Dyer, a friend of Sidney's, who is remembered as the writer of the lines, "My mind to me a Kingdom is." Still another was the Earl of Oxford. Altogether it may be said that in courtly circles of the age, lyric poetry was the natural literary expression, much as the drama was the typical form of popular literature.

The lyric and the drama must be counted as the great literary forms of the period, for these two represented truth to feeling and truth to life. Upon the rest of the literature of the sixteenth century, even including Spenser's wonderful poem, rested a blight of artificiality. The age was in the main one of conscious learning from masters, classical and foreign; of imitation, of uncertainty as to the principles and the uses of literature. The

writers of the time were hampered by uncritical selection of material, by the requirements of conventions, such as that which prescribed the pastoral, even by absurd theories such as that which tried to proscribe rhyme. Only in two directions, the lyric and the drama, did they win complete freedom, and in both they used it grandly.

CHAPTER V

THE RENAISSANCE: THE DRAMA BEFORE SHAKESPEARE

THE drama, as has just been pointed out, was the most popular literary form of the Renaissance, as it was also the most powerful and spontaneous. It expressed, as no other literary product could have done, the manifold life of the Elizabethan age. Its chief glory is, of course, Shakespeare; but the "school" of dramatists from which Shakespeare proceeded was the result of a steady growth, prolonged through nearly four centuries. To trace the English drama from the beginning, we must go back as far as the Norman conquest.

Secular Sources of the Drama.

One element in the development of the drama proceeded from the Norman love of shows and spectacles. When the Norman kings were once firmly seated on the English throne, they gave full reign to their taste for splendid pageantry. If a royal wedding was to be celebrated, or a victorious monarch welcomed back from war, London was turned into a place of festival. At the entrance gate of the city, or at fixed places on the route to church or palace, elaborate structures were built, representing some mythical or allegorical scene,—the gods grouped upon Olympus, an armed St. George giving combat to a golden dragon, or nymphs and satyrs sporting in enchanted gardens. Sometimes music was added, and the personators, by dialogue and action, gave welcome to the royal party. These pageants developed at the Renaissance into a special form of dramatic entertainment, the Masque. Meanwhile, by stimulating in the people a love of dramatic spectacle, they paved the way for regular drama.

A much more important source of the drama, however, was the mass-service of the Catholic church, especially at Christmas-tide and Easter. The ordinary service at these times was enriched with extra ceremonies, such as burying the crucifix in a tomb of the church on Good Friday and disinterring it on Easter morning, with monks or choir-boys to take the parts of the three Maries, the angel at the tomb, and the chorus of rejoicing angels in heaven. These little dramatic ceremonies gradually became detached from the service; were moved from the church into the church-yard; and later, when the crowds desecrated the graves in their eagerness to see and hear, were transferred to the public green or town square. By Chaucer's time these "miracle plays" or "mysteries" had passed to a large extent out of the hands of the priests, and had come under the control of the trade-guilds, who made use of them to celebrate their annual festival of Corpus Christi. Rivalry among the guilds, and the desire of each to possess a separate play, led to the setting forth of the whole Scripture story from Genesis to Revelations, in a series or cycle forming a great drama, of which the separate plays were, in a sense, only single acts.

Religious Source of the Drama.

In order to gain some idea of the appeal made by the miracle plays to the audience for which they were intended, let us imagine ourselves for a moment in a provincial English town at the beginning of the fifteenth century, on the morning of Corpus Christi day. Shortly after dawn, heralds have made the round of the city to announce the coming spectacle. The places where the cars or "pageants," which form both stage and dressing-room, are to stop, are crowded with the motley population of a mediæval city. The spectators of consequence occupy seats upon scaffolds erected for the purpose, or look on from the windows of neighboring houses, while the humbler folk jostle each other in the street. Soon

The Miracle Plays.

the first pageant appears, a great box mounted on four wheels and drawn by apprentices of the masons' guild, which guild is charged with presenting the Creation of Eve and the Fall of Man. The curtains at the front and the side of the great box are drawn, revealing an upper compartment, within which the main action is to take place. On a raised platform sits enthroned a majestic person in a red robe, with gilt hair and beard, impersonating the Creator. Before him lies Adam, dressed in a close-fitting leather garment painted white or flesh-color. The Creator, after announcing his intention of making for Adam a helpmeet, descends and touches the sleeper's side. Thereupon Eve rises through a trap-door, and Adam wakes rejoicing. Again the Creator ascends to his throne, and Adam withdraws to a corner of the pageant, leaving Eve to be tempted by a great serpent cunningly contrived of green and gold cloth,in which an actor is concealed. This monster, crawling upon the stage from below, harangues Eve with lengthy eloquence. Then follows the eating of the apple, and the coming of God's angels, with gilt hair, scarlet robes, and swords waved and ridged like fire, to drive the pair from the garden into the wilderness, that is, into the lower compartment of the pageant, which is now uncovered to view. A trumpeter advances before the car, and sounds a long note in token of the conclusion of the play. The 'prentices harness themselves to the car; and it moves off to the next station, to be replaced by others. These represent in turn, Noah's Flood, given by the guild of water-merchants; the Sacrifice of Isaac, given by the butchers' guild; the Nativity, the Crucifixion, and so on in long procession, until the crowning spectacle of the Day of Judgment. The chief feature of spectacular interest in this last, is Hell-mouth, a great dragon's jaw belching flame and smoke, into which lost souls, dressed in black and yellow particolor, are tossed by the Devil, —a most satisfactory character with a bright red beard,

a hairy body, a hideous mask, horns, and a long forked tail.

Crude and even grotesque as much of this seems, the miracle play was, to the men of the Middle Ages, a very impressive thing. It not only appealed to their religious natures and to their love of spectacle; it also interested them profoundly from the human side. For the authors were free to embellish the biblical story with episodes drawn from the common life of their own day. Even when these added episodes took a broadly farcical turn, nobody was shocked, any more than by the imps and monsters which grinned at them from the solemn shadows of their cathedrals. In the play of Noah's Flood, the patriarch causes first the animals to enter the Ark, then his sons and daughters-in-law; but when he comes to his wife, she objects. She does not relish being cooped up without her "gossips," and leaving these amiable women to drown. Remonstrances at last proving fruitless, Noah resorts to the argument of blows, and drives his scolding helpmeet into the Ark, to the great delight of the crowd. In the play of Abraham and Isaac, the yearning love of the old man for his little son, and the sweet, trustful nature of the boy, are brought home to us in such a way as to intensify the pathos of the moment when Abraham makes ready, at the Lord's command, to sacrifice the life which is dearest to him on earth. The pleading of the boy, the gradual overmastering of his fear of death by his pity for his father's anguish and his solicitude for his mother's grief, are rendered with touching truth.

Germs of Regular Drama.

> "Therfor doo owr Lordes bydding,
> And wan I am ded, then prey for me:
> But, good fader, tell ye my moder no-thyng,
> Say that I am in another cunthre dwellyng."

In these episodes, and in many others which might be given, lie the germs of regular drama. Such humorous

scenes as the quarrel of Noah and his wife, constitute in reality crude little comedies out of which regular comedy could readily grow. In such tragic scenes as the Sacrifice of Isaac, the Slaughter of the Innocents, and the Crucifixion, the elements of noble tragedy were already present.

The miracle plays attempted to set forth only a part of the teaching necessary to man's salvation, namely that part contained in the history of Adam's Fall, the redemption through Christ, and the final Judgment. This was almost entirely theological; it dealt with matters of belief. To complete this teaching there was needed some exposition of the ethical side of religion, which deals with matters of conduct; and it was this ethical doctrine which the "Morality plays" tried to bring home to men's minds. By means of such personifications or abstractions as the World, the Flesh, Mankind, Mercy, Justice, Peace, the Seven Deadly Sins, Good and Bad Angels, Gluttony, Covetousness, Old Age, and Death, the morality plays attempted to represent, in a graphic way which would appeal to popular audiences, the conflict between sin and righteousness for the possession of the human soul. The early Moralities have an earnestness of purpose, and a largeness of theme, which make them no unworthy supplement to the miracle cycles. Little by little, however, their character changed: the treatment was narrowed so as to include only a single aspect of man's life; the characters became less and less abstract; and farcical matter was introduced to lighten the intolerably solemn tone. In these later moralities the character of Vice played a great part. He was usually dressed in the costume of a court fool, and carried a sword of lath. His function was to attend upon the Devil, and to worry, trick, and belabor his master for the amusement of the crowd. The Vice survived in the fool of Shakespeare's plays, though it is hard to recognize him in the philosophical Touchstone of *As You Like It*,

The Morality Plays.

or the musical fool who sings such charming lyrics in *Twelfth Night*.

Out of the moralities arose a species of play, various in its nature, known as the Interlude. The name took its origin from the practice observed in the houses of the great, of having these little dramas performed in the intervals of a banquet. In the old play of *Sir Thomas More*, a band of strolling players is announced while Sir Thomas is dining, and they perform an interlude before him and his guests. Usually these pieces had little action, and required almost no stage-setting. For example, *The Four P's*, of John Heywood, "a newe and a very mery enterlude of a Palmer, a Pardoner, a Potycary and a Pedlar," is nothing more than an amusing series of speeches by the four impersonators, in which they vaunt their several callings, make themselves out very arrant rascals indeed, and by so doing satirize the society which they represent. The Interludes, as a whole, afford a curious illustration of the growing intellectual curiosity of the Renaissance, as well as of the popular devotion to the dramatic form.

The Interludes.

Besides the Miracle plays, the Moralities, and the Interludes, "Robin Hood plays," setting forth the merry adventures of Robin Hood, Friar Tuck, and Maid Marian, in Sherwood Forest, were popular; as were also Christmas plays, or "mummings," in which figured certain stock characters, such as Old Father Christmas, St. George and the Dragon, Old King Cole, and the Merry Andrew. The student will find in Thomas Hardy's *Return of the Native*, an account of the Christmas mummings as they still exist, or did exist until recent years, in remote corners of England.

Robin Hood and Christmas Plays.

In addition to these native elements in the formation of the drama, there was an important influence from without. This influence was classical, and came from the great revival of interest in Latin literature, which marked the

beginning of the Renaissance. It became the fashion in the fifteenth century for school-masters to present the comedies of Terence and Plautus on the stages of grammar schools, with the students as actors. Before 1541 Nicholas Udall, head-master of Eton, wrote for his boys a play, modelled after Plautus, called *Ralph Royster Doyster*, the first regular English comedy. The importance of *Ralph Royster Doyster*, in furnishing English playwrights with an example of rapid dialogue and clear construction of plot, can hardly be over-estimated. The play is, however, an artificial production, with very little local color, or truth to English life. This objection cannot be brought against the next notable comedy, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, supposed to have been written by John Still, an Oxford Master-of-arts, about 1566. Here the Latin model is still followed in formal particulars, but the main characters are manifestly studied from real sixteenth century peasants, and the background of English village life is given with much vivid realism. *Gammer Gurton's Needle* is a great landmark in the history of the drama in England, for it shows that English comedy had been able to learn from classical models the lesson of clear construction, and steady development of plot, without sacrificing that broad and realistic comic spirit which had found expression in the by-play of the miracles and moralities, and which was shortly to come to flower in such masterpieces of pure English humor as Dekker's *Shoemakers' Holiday*, and the tavern scenes in Shakespeare's *Henry IV.*

The Classical Influence: Comedy.

Upon tragedy, the classical influence was even greater, and the struggle on the part of the learned playwrights of the Universities, to impose the classical form upon English tragedy, was more sustained. The classic dramatist selected for emulation was Seneca. Between 1560 and 1581 ten tragedies of Seneca were freely translated. Coming into the hands of English

The Classical Influence: Tragedy.

playwrights, just when they were eagerly but blindly feeling their way toward a national type of drama, these plays could not fail to impress them much, perhaps all the more because the Senecan tragedy was directly opposed to that kind of drama to which the English people naturally inclined. Seneca's plays have very little stage action; important events, instead of being directly represented, are merely reported on the stage, by messengers or others. The tendency of English tragedy, on the other hand, was from the first to present everything bodily on the stage, even the storming of cities, or battles between great armies, where the means at the disposal of the actors were laughably inadequate to the demand. Latin drama, again, is usually careful to preserve unity of time and place, that is, to make all the action pass in a given locality, and to cover no more than the events of a single day. English playwrights, on the contrary, had no hesitation in shifting the scene to half a dozen different countries in the course of a single play; and they thought nothing of introducing in the first act a child who grew to manhood in the second act, and in the third died and handed on the story, to be acted out by his sons and grandsons in the fourth and fifth. Classic drama also drew a very sharp line between comedy and tragedy, admitting no comic element into a serious play. The English drama, on the contrary, from the miracle plays down, set comedy side by side with tragedy; it mingled the farcical with the august, the laughable with the pathetic, as they actually are mingled in life.

The young University "wits" (as men of intellectual pretensions were then called), while they shared in the national enthusiasm for stage-plays, were many of them repelled by the crudities and absurdities of the native drama, emphasized as these were by the meagre stage-setting. They wished, therefore, to force the elegant but old Senecan model upon the public. They found a

powerful champion in Sir Philip Sidney, who, in his *Defence of Poesie,* heaped unsparing ridicule upon the native playwrights of his day. In 1561, two young gentlemen of the Inner Temple, Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville, presented before Queen Elizabeth a play called *Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex,* which was accepted as a kind of manifesto on the part of the classicists, and as an example of what could be done in handling a subject from British legend, on the lines laid down by Seneca. *Gorboduc* has a chorus, made up of four old men of Britain; messengers to report the action, almost all of which takes place off the stage; and long epic and lyric passages—what the French call *tirades*—to take the place of stage-action. It is a stately production, and deserves veneration as the first regular tragedy written in English. That it had a great influence upon the native drama, just struggling into consciousness of itself, is evidenced by the continual efforts made by the playwrights of the next twenty or thirty years, to force their stubborn, overgrown material into some semblance of the neat classic form.

In the end, the native form won the day. It had on its side not only long tradition, but the overwhelming weight of popular taste. It was infinitely better suited to the robust imagination of the men of the English Renaissance, eager for excitement and craving strong sensations. Nevertheless, the apprenticeship of English playwrights to a foreign master, brief and incomplete though it was, was invaluable. It taught them to impose some restraint upon the riot of their fancy; it showed them the beauty and artistic necessity of good structure; in a word, it brought form out of chaos. Nor did the influence wholly die, even when the battle had gone once for all in favor of the "romantic" drama. Marlowe, whose genius was intensely romantic, shows abundant traces of it; and the "Chorus" of *King*

Effect of the Classical Influence.

Henry V., *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Pericles*, is a slender remnant of the Senecan chorus. Ben Jonson, with a haughty disregard for popular applause, continued to wage a single-handed battle in favor of classicism, from the beginning of his career until twenty years after Shakespeare's death, when the Elizabethan drama was drawing near the end of its magnificent course.

We now stand on the threshold of that wonderful sixty years (1580–1640) during which this course was run. As has been shown in the last chapter, England found herself, at the beginning of this period, quickened by three of the most potent influences which can affect the life of a nation: widespread intellectual curiosity; the beginnings of an intense religious ferment; and the pride of suddenly discovered national strength. The young wits who came up from the Universities to London, tingling with the imaginative excitement of the age, seized upon the popular theatre, crude though it then was, as promising to make possible a form of art concrete enough, flexible enough, exciting enough, to satisfy the life of the day with a reflection of its own diversity and splendor. The marvellously swift and many-sided dramatic development of the next thirty years (1580–1610), abundantly testifies to the sound instinct of the men who saw in the theatre the best instrument for the expression of their swarming fancies.

The Great Dramatic Period.

The Elizabethan drama has been called "the drama of rhetoric," and from one point of view the description is exact. Not only were dramatists compelled by the meagre stage-setting to indulge in long passages of description and soliloquy, but they also loved rhetoric for its own sake, as did their audiences. Nothing is more curious to our modern ears than the endless quibble and word-play, the elaborate conceits, the sounding and far-fetched phrase, in which all the Elizabethan dramatists, and Shakespeare as much as

any, delighted to clothe their thought. Lyly's *Euphues* (see page 70) had a marked influence upon the early Elizabethan drama, both for good and evil. The taste for artificial language which it reflected and fostered, filled the early drama with passages which are intolerably mannered; but, on the other hand, it refined poetic diction, and saved the drama from the rudeness by which a form of art so popular in its appeal and so humble in its origin, was naturally threatened.

Lyly and the Child Actors.

As a dramatist Lyly occupies a peculiar position among Shakespeare's predecessors. He wrote, not for the regular dramatic companies, but for companies of child actors. These were choir-boys, one company attached to St. Paul's Cathedral and known as the "Children of Paul's," the other attached to the Queen's chapel at Whitehall and known as the "Children of the Chapel Royal." To these child companies Lyly's tone and matter were admirably adapted. His plays are for the most part graceful adaptations of classic myths, so turned as to have a bearing upon some contemporary happening at court, yet moving always in an atmosphere of quaint and dreamlike unreality. *Endymion* is an elaborate compliment to Queen Elizabeth, who appears in the play in the character of Cynthia, the virgin huntress. *The Woman in the Moon* is a veiled satire upon women in general, and Elizabeth in particular, written after Lyly had been soured by years of fruitless seeking after court favor. Through the plays are scattered delightful lyrics, which Lyly was perhaps especially tempted to insert, by the clear voices of the child players.

The Regular Companies and their Theatres.

The child actors, for whom Lyly wrote, played almost exclusively in private—at court, or in the houses of the nobility. But the regular companies had already begun to establish themselves in the suburbs of London, and to erect permanent theatres. The first of these play-houses, known simply as

"The Theatre," was built in Finsbury Fields, to the north of the city, by James Burbage, in 1576. It was at this play-house that Shakespeare first found employment. Burbage's company, on the destruction of The Theatre, built the Globe, on the south bank of the Thames; and here, on the Bankside, other places of theatrical entertainment rapidly sprang up. After a time the actors became bold enough to push into the city itself. Burbage built the Blackfriars, as a winter theatre. A rival company built the Fortune, also in the city limits. By the end of the century, eleven theatres existed in the city and in the free lands or "liberties" adjoining.

Performances took place usually at three in the afternoon, and were announced by the hanging out of a flag and the blowing of trumpets. The theatres were round or octagonal structures, unroofed except for a shed or canopy over the stage. The winter theatres, such as the Blackfriars, were entirely roofed in. The stage extended out into the body of the house, was open on three sides, and was sufficiently elevated so that the main bulk of the audience, standing on the bare ground which formed the floor or pit of the theatre, could have a fair view. Persons who could afford to pay a higher price than the "groundlings," took advantage of the boxes built round the pit; and young gallants, for an extra fee, could have seats upon the stage itself, where they smoked their pipes, peeled oranges, cracked nuts, and often interfered with the performance by chaffing a poor actor, or by flirting ostentatiously with the fair occupant of a neighboring box. In accordance with the luxurious taste of the age in dress, the costumes of the actors were often very rich. All women's parts were played by boys; actresses were not seen in England until after the Restoration. The stage-setting was of the simplest, a change of scene being indicated often merely by a placard, or at most by a roughly painted piece of paste-board and a few stage properties. A tree and a bench did duty for a garden; a

wooden cannon and a paste-board tower indicated a siege. This meagreness of stage-setting, so far from being a misfortune, was in no small measure responsible for the literary greatness of the Elizabethan drama; for it threw the dramatist back upon vivid poetic expression, as the only means of stimulating the imagination of his audience and of preserving the dramatic illusion.

While Lyly was at the height of his vogue, during the late eighties of the sixteenth century, a group of young dramatists were coming to the front, whose appeal was not to the court but to the people, and whose plays were written for the popular theatres just described. The most important of these dramatists were Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene, and George Peele, with Marlowe an undisputed leader. The non-dramatic work of these men has already been mentioned (see pages 75 and 83). Greene was by natural gift a prose romancer, Peele a lyric poet, and at least half of Marlowe's genius was of an epic kind. But the tendency of the age was so overwhelmingly in favor of drama, that all three, in common with many of their fellows, were diverted into the channel of dramatic expression; and Marlowe achieved in this not wholly sympathetic medium all but the highest distinction.

Marlowe.

Christopher Marlowe, one of the most striking figures of the English Renaissance, is the true founder of the popular English drama, though he was himself an outgrowth of the long period of preparation which we have been traversing. He was born in 1564, two months before Shakespeare, in the old cathedral town of Canterbury. His father was a shoemaker; the boy was sent to Cambridge by a patron, who had noticed his quick parts. He graduated at nineteen; and four years later (1587) he astonished London with his first play, *Tamburlaine*, which he brought out with the Lord Admiral's Men, the rival company to the Lord Chamberlain's Men, whom Shakespeare had joined a short time before.

In the brief and haughty prologue prefixed to *Tamburlaine,* Marlowe not only announced clearly the character of that play, but hinted at the programme which he proposed to carry out in the future :— His "Programme."

> "From jigging veins of rhyming mother wits
> And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,
> We'll lead you to the stately tents of war
> Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
> Threatening the world with high astounding terms
> And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword."

The "jigging veins of rhyming mother wits," is a sneer at the use of rhyme and awkward tumbling lines of fourteen syllables, which was customary with the popular playwrights of the time. For this "jigging vein" he proposes to substitute blank verse, which, though it had been employed previously by Sackville and Norton, in *Gorboduc,* had not established itself. It is a sign of Marlowe's artistic insight that he should have recognized at once the value of blank verse for dramatic poetry; and we can see, beneath the surface of his words, a proud consciousness of his own power over this almost untried form of verse. Out of it he built that "mighty line," which astounded and fascinated his contemporaries; and his success with it fixed it firmly as the vehicle of serious drama henceforth. By his sneer at the "conceits" that "clownage keeps in pay," Marlowe showed his determination not to pander to the pit by means of vulgar comedy and horse-play, but to treat an elevated theme with seriousness. By the "stately tents of war," to which he promises to lead his hearer, he typified the dignity and largeness of scope which he proposed to give to all his work. By the last three lines of the prologue, he foreshadowed his plan of giving unity to his dramas, by making them revolve around some single great personality, engaged in some titanic struggle for power; and likewise of treating this struggle with the rhetorical splendor, the

"high astounding terms," without which Elizabethan drama is now inconceivable. This programme he carried out in the main with consistency.

Tamburlaine is a pure "hero-play." The Scythian shepherd conquers, one after another, the kingdoms of the East, forcing kings to harness themselves to his chariot, and carrying with him a great cage in which a captive emperor is kept like a wild beast. The huge barbaric figure of Tamburlaine is always before our eyes, and the action of the play is only a series of his triumphs. His character, half-bestial, half-godlike in its remorseless strength and confidence, dominates the imagination like an elemental force of nature, and lends itself admirably to those "high astounding terms," which fill whole pages of the play with thunderous monologue.

His Plays.

Doctor Faustus, Marlowe's second work, is also a hero-play, and is cast on even larger lines. It is a dramatized story of the life and death of a mediæval scholar, who sells his soul to the devil, in return for a life of power and pleasure. It embodied, in another form, the same aspiration after the unattainable, which Tamburlaine had typified; and the story involved large questions of human will and fate, such as an imagination like Marlowe's loves to grapple with. It can hardly be said that the poet lived up to the possibilities of his subject. The play, as it has come down to us, is disfigured by comic passages of a coarse and tasteless sort, those very "conceits of clownage" which Marlowe had formerly declared war against. But even where the workmanship is poor there is always something imposing in the design; and certain passages have hardly been surpassed for power and beauty. When Mephistopheles raises from the dead the spirit of Helen of Troy, Faustus utters one rapturous exclamation,

> "Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
> And burnt the topless towers of Ilion?"

And on his death-bed he starts up with the cry,

"Lo, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!"

—three lines which would alone serve to stamp Marlowe as of the company of imperial poets.

Marlowe's third play, *The Jew of Malta*, is again a study of the lust of power,—this time the power bestowed by great riches. Barabbas, the old Jewish merchant of Malta, is the first vigorous sketch, of which Shakespeare was to make in Shylock a finished masterpiece. The first two acts are conceived on a large scale, and carefully worked out; but after these Marlowe seems again to have fallen from his own ideal, and to have worked hastily and insincerely. Raw horrors accumulate on horror's head, and the play degenerates into melodrama of the goriest kind. Nevertheless it shows a remarkable advance over *Tamburlaine* and *Doctor Faustus*, in the knitting-together of cause and effect. Marlowe's growth in dramatic technique is still more strikingly apparent in his last play, *Edward II.* This is unquestionably his masterpiece, so far as play-making goes, though for the very reason that it discards rhetorical monologue for the rapid dramatic interchange of thought, it contains fewer quotable passages of pure poetry than any of the others.

Marlowe was killed in 1593, at the age of twenty-nine. There is something in the meteor-like suddenness of his appearance in the skies of poetry, and in the swift flaming of his genius through its course, that seems to make inevitable his violent end. He sums up for us the Renaissance passion for life, sleepless in its search and daring in its grasp after the infinite in power, in knowledge, and in pleasure.

Robert Greene was probably encouraged to write for the stage by Marlowe's success with Tamburlaine. Greene's best plays are *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and *James IV.* The first of these has some country scenes, grouped about the character of Margaret,

Greene.

the fair maid of Fressingfield, which are in a fine healthy English tone. *James IV.* has a clear and coherent development, unusual at this stage of the drama; one of its motifs, that of the persecuted woman who flees to the forest in the disguise of a page, was destined to become immensely popular in the later romantic drama, and to be used over and over again, with endless variations, by Shakespeare and Fletcher.

Peele.

George Peele, like Greene, began his career by non-dramatic writing. His most characteristic early work consists of poems written for ceremonial occasions. One of these, "A Farewell to the Famous and Fortunate Generals of our English Forces," written on the departure of Drake and Norris, on the expedition to Portugal in 1589, is full of the new national spirit. Some of the lines have a superb ring of exultation and pride :—

> "You fight for Christ and England's peerless queen,
> Elizabeth the wonder of the world,
> Over whose throne the enemies of God
> Have thundered . . . . . .
> O ten times treble happy men, that fight
> Under the cross of Christ and England's queen!"

This passage well illustrates Peele's peculiar gift as a poet, that of making his lines *kindle* as they go. His best play, *David and Bethsabe*, is, considered merely as a play, poor enough; but it is full of passages, usually only a few lines long, which seem to take fire before a reader's eyes, and to burn with the softest yet most intense flame of the imagination. *David and Bethsabe* may be regarded as a late type of the miracle-play, stripped of its sacred significance, and saturated with the sensuous grace and rich color of the Renaissance. Another play of Peele's, *The Old Wives' Tale*, is famous as having furnished Milton with the ground-work of *Comus*. It is a very crude but a very charming play; a sort of dramatized nursery tale of

giants, bewitched maidens, buried lamps, and magic wells, put forth with the occasional poetic grace and the aimless dreamy digression proper to the species.

Peele was out of place in drama, and never succeeded in writing a really good play. But his contribution to the development of dramatic style was nevertheless great. He succeeded in keeping much of the strength of Marlowe's "mighty line," while infusing into it a new tenderness and soft play of color. If Marlowe furnished the strength, Peele as surely furnished the sweetness, which went to make up the incomparable blend of Elizabethan drama at its great moment.

CHAPTER VI

THE RENAISSANCE: SHAKESPEARE

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE was born on or about the 24th of April, 1564, in the village of Stratford. He was the third child of John Shakespeare and Mary Arden. His mother was of gentle blood, and was possessed of some wealth by inheritance. His father, though a man of consideration in the village, was of lower station, a tanner and glover by trade. Until the age of fourteen the boy attended the Stratford grammar school, where he picked up the "small Latin and less Greek," to which his immensely learned friend Ben Jonson rather scornfully refers. The better part of his education, a wonderfully deep and sure insight into Nature, and a wide acquaintance with the folk-lore of his native district, he doubtless began to acquire in boyhood, by rambles through the meadows and along the streams of Warwickshire, stopping to chat with old crones over their cottage fires, or to listen to ploughmen as they took their nooning. Only a few miles away was the picturesque town of Warwick, with its magnificent castle, to set him dreaming of the past. Within an easy day's walk lay Kenilworth Castle, the seat of Elizabeth's favorite, Leicester; and the historic town of Coventry, where one might still see miracle-plays performed on certain festival days. Travelling companies of actors visited Stratford two or three times a year, and had to apply to Shakespeare's father for leave to play. At their performances young Shakespeare was doubtless sometimes present, drinking in his first impressions of the fascinating world of the stage. In these and other ways his mind

Shakespeare's Early Life.

found the food it needed; and stored up many a brave image, which it should afterward evoke in the thick air of a crowded London theatre.

About 1578 the fortunes of his father began to decline, and Shakespeare was withdrawn from school. In spite of the rapidly failing prosperity of the family, he was married at eighteen to Ann Hathaway, a young woman eight years his senior, the daughter of a peasant family of Shottery, near Stratford. That the marriage was hasty and unfortunate has been conjectured from the general course of Shakespeare's life, as well as from various passages in the plays, which seem to have an autobiographic color. Certain it is that some time between 1585 and 1587, he left Stratford to seek his fortune in the capital, and that until the close of his life he returned to his native town only at rare intervals. The immediate cause of his leaving is said by doubtful tradition to have been the anger of Sir Thomas Lucy, a local magnate, over a deer-stealing prank in which Shakespeare and other wild young blades of the village had engaged.

Outside the walls of London to the north, not far from where the road from Shakespeare's country entered the purlieus of the capital, stood the oldest of the London play-houses, called simply The Theatre. It had at the head of its company the famous actor James Burbage. Whether from accident or set intention, Shakespeare soon found himself connected with Burbage's company, where he made himself indispensable as actor, and as retoucher of old plays. He continued with Burbage's company, as actor, playwright, and stockholder, when The Theatre was pulled down, and rebuilt as the Globe on the south bank of the Thames.

Shakespeare in London.

Of the external facts of Shakespeare's life in London we know few, and those few of small importance. Early in his career he was attacked by Robert Greene, who, in a deathbed exhortation to Marlowe, Peele, and others,

called him "an upstart crow beautified with our feathers, that . . . supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the rest of us." The publisher of Greene's pamphlet afterward printed a formal apology, testifying to young Shakespeare's worth and amiability. We know of his friendship with William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, and with the Earl of Southampton; of his friendly rivalry, in art and talk, with "rare Ben Jonson," the second dramatist of the age; of his careful conduct of his business affairs, and of his popularity as a playwright. Except for these few gleams of light, his external life is wrapped in mystery; and the very breadth and dramatic greatness of his plays prevent us from drawing any but the broadest inferences concerning his personal history.

The foundation of Shakespeare's modest fortune is thought to have been laid by a gift from his friend and patron, the young Earl of Southampton, to whom he dedicated his youthful poems, *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece;* but it was mainly by his earnings at the Globe and Blackfriars' theatres that he was able to reinstate his parents in their old position of burgherly comfort, and to gain for himself a patent of gentility, and the possession of the best homestead in his native village, with broad acres of land to add to its dignity. Hither, at the age of fifty, he retired, to spend the remainder of his life in country quietude, with his wife and his unmarried daughter Judith. He died in 1616, at the age of fifty-two; and was buried in the old church by the Avon, where thousands of pilgrims now go each year to read the words on his tomb beseeching men to let his dust lie quiet in its grave.

His Return to Stratford; his Death.

Shakespeare began his dramatic work, as has been said, by retouching old plays; of this early work the three parts of *Henry VI.* remain as an interesting specimen of his first apprentice efforts. He soon fell under the fascination of Marlowe's style, and produced *Titus Andronicus,* in a vein

of raw horror calculated to outdo Marlowe at his hardest and cruellest. Of Marlowe's influence we shall have occasion to speak again, when we consider *Richard III.*; but the plays which immediately follow *Titus Andronicus* do not show a trace of it. The first of these, *Love's Labour's Lost*, sprang from Shakespeare's interest in the fanciful, artificial language to which Lyly's *Euphues* had given a tremendous vogue, in Elizabeth's court and among all the young fashionables of London. Although he could later ridicule Euphuistic speech, he here becomes himself entangled in its meshes. He had not yet gained skill enough to handle his satire with easy mastery. His next play, the *Comedy of Errors*, was an experiment in still another direction. It is an adaptation of a Latin comedy, the *Menaechmi* of *Plautus*. The farcical plot turns upon the resemblance of twin brothers, in whose service are two clownish servants, also counterparts of each other. Shakespeare handles the intrigue with a skill which shows how rapidly he was growing in stage technique. Instead of following up his success in this kind, however, he turned immediately to try a new experiment, in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. This is a dramatized romance, adapted freely from one of the popular "novels" or love-romances of his day. The play, thin and youthful as it is, has more than a touch of real Shakespearean grace. The scene (Act II., sc. III.) in which Launce, the clown, upbraids his dog for not joining in the family distress at his departure, is a piece of glorious nonsense; and the famous lyric "Who is Silvia?" is the first of many exquisite songs which shed their jewelled light through the plays.

Earliest Plays: Period of Experiment.

Shakespeare had now made rapid experiments in four directions: in *Henry VI.* he had essayed the chronicle- or history-play, in *Titus Andronicus* the melodrama, in *Love's Labour's Lost* the "conversation-play," in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* the dramatic romance. He brought

this first period of his work to a close with two more efforts, wholly different in kind from the preceding and from each other. These also are experimental, in the sense that they enter realms before unknown to drama; but both in conception and execution they are finished masterpieces. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet* show that in several directions Shakespeare had now passed beyond his apprentice state, and had attained the rank of master-craftsman. The first of these plays is thought to have been written in 1593; the second, though it did not receive its final form until 1596 or 1597, was probably produced before the poet's thirtieth year.

Earliest Masterpieces.

A Midsummer Night's Dream is thought to have been written for some nobleman's marriage-festival, to take the place of the masque or allegorical pageant traditional upon such occasions. Theseus, duke of Athens, and his bride Hippolyta, in whose lofty figures the noble bridal pair are perhaps shadowed forth, represent the sentiment of love in its serene and lofty mood. About this central pair revolve three other groups, representing love in its fanciful and burlesque aspects. The first group is made up of the Athenian youths and maidens astray in the moonlight woods, loving at cross-purposes, and played upon by Puck with a magic liquor, which adds confusion to confusion in their hearts. The second group consists of the fairy-queen Titania and her lord Oberon; and here the treatment of the love-theme becomes deliciously satiric, as it depicts the passion of the dainty queen for bully Bottom transformed into an ass. In the third group, that of the journeymen actors who present the "tedious brief scene of young Pyramus and his love Thisbe: very tragical mirth," the love-theme is modulated into the most absurd burlesque. Then, poured over all, holding these diverse elements in unity, is the atmosphere of midsummer moonlight, and the aerial poetry of the fairy world.

"Midsummer Night's Dream."

A Midsummer Night's Dream, like the plays which preceded it, treats of love in a light and fanciful way, never more than half in earnest and usually frankly trivial. In *Romeo and Juliet* love ceases to be a mere sentiment, to be played with and jested over; it becomes a passion, tragical with the issues of life and death. Here for the first time Shakespeare was really in earnest. The two young lives are caught in a fiery whirlwind, which sweeps them through the rapturous hours of their new love, to their death together in the tomb of Juliet's ancestors. The action, instead of being spread over months, as in the poem from which Shakespeare took the plot, is crowded into five days; and from the first meeting of the lovers until the end, a sense of hurry, now ecstatic, now desperate, keeps the passion mounting in a swift crescendo. Not only is the play great as a "tragedy of fate" in the Greek sense, but in the drawing of character the poet now for the first time works with unerring deftness and power. The vulgar, kind-hearted nurse, the witty, hair-brained Mercutio, the vacillating yet stubborn Capulet, the lovers themselves, so sharply differentiated in the manner of their love, all these and a dozen minor figures have the very hue and gesture of life.

"Romeo and Juliet."

Shakespeare now, at thirty years of age, turned back to the kind of play with which he had begun, and proceeded to throw into dramatic form the rough masses of English history which he found in the chronicles of Holinshed. In *Richard III.*, again working under Marlowe's influence, he produced a portrait of elemental energy and evil pride, which the creator of Tamburlaine and Faustus might have mistaken for his own handiwork. This he followed up with *Richard II.* and *King John,* the latter famous for the tenderly drawn and touching figure of the little prince, Arthur; it has been thought that in writing the moving passages where Arthur begs for his life, Shakespeare perhaps had in mind his own son, Hamnet,

English Historical Plays.

who had just died at the age of eleven. As Shakespeare went on, he gained steadily in power to handle his material. The three plays just mentioned are workmanlike and vigorous in increasing degree, but not great. The three plays which close the series, on the other hand, while not among the poet's supreme masterpieces, contain some of his most remarkable work. These are *Henry IV.* (in two parts) and *Henry V.*

"Henry IV." and "Henry V."

In planning *Henry IV.* Shakespeare hit upon the admirable notion of interspersing the somewhat dry historic matter with scenes from the London tavern life of his own day,—a life full of racy humors fitted to afford the desired comic relief. As the *genius loci* of the tavern world, he created Falstaff, the fat old knight who helps Prince Hal (afterward King Henry V.) to sow his wild oats. The immortal figure of Falstaff holds the prime place among the creations of Shakespeare's humor, as royally as Hamlet holds his "intellectual throne." In Henry V. we see Shakespeare in a new and very engaging light; it is, indeed, hardly a figure of speech to say that we *see* the poet,—for in this play, as nowhere else in his dramas, does he speak with the voice of personal enthusiasm. The manly, open character of the king, and his splendid victories over the French, made him a kind of symbol of England's greatness, both in character and in achievement. The poet transfers to the battle of Agincourt the national pride which had been kindled by the defeat of the Armada; and makes his play a great pæan of praise for the island kingdom. In the "choruses" introducing the several acts, and even in the speeches of the characters themselves, he utters in lyric strophes an overwhelming patriotic emotion.

The schooling through which Shakespeare put himself in writing the English historical plays was arduous. He had to teach to the populace of his time the history of their country; it was therefore incumbent upon him to

use the material without gross falsification, and at the same time to give it life and artistic form. To do this in the strictest of all poetic media, the drama, and with the meagre resources of the Elizabethan stage, was a task which strengthened his art for the work he had still to do; especially for the four great tragedies, *Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth,* and *King Lear,* which mark the height of his achievement. Before writing these, however, he seems, if we are justified in deducing his personal mood from the mood of his work, to have passed through a period of unbroken serenity and high spirits. At any rate, the fruit of these years was a succession of joyous comedies, touched with the golden light of love and romance.

Effect of English Historical Plays in Strengthening Shakespeare's Art.

Even while writing the histories, he had found time to write *The Merchant of Venice,* and two brisk farces, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor.* The last, said to have been written at the request of Queen Elizabeth, who desired to see Falstaff in love, is a hasty and rather perfunctory piece of work, written mostly in prose. It is quite otherwise with the first-mentioned play, which served as a relief from the work of making drama out of chronicle-history. In *The Merchant of Venice* we see for the first time the presiding presence of the moral sense, and a fundamental seriousness, betraying itself even in the deeper and more religious harmonies of the verse, which mark the poet's advance over the *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet.*

In Portia Shakespeare drew his second great portrait of a woman. She is an elder sister of Juliet, less vehement, with a larger experience of life, a stronger and more practised intellect. In the three comedies which now followed, he drew three other unforgettable female portraits, Beatrice of *Much Ado about Nothing,* Rosalind of *As You Like It,* and Viola of *Twelfth Night.* And, grouped around them, what a holiday

The "Merchant of Venice" and the "Joyous Comedies."

company of delightful figures!—Benedict, "the married man" trying in vain to parry the thrusts of Beatrice's nimble wit; the philosophical Touchstone, shaking his head over the country-wench Audrey, because the gods have not made her poetical; the meditative Jacques (a first faint sketch, it has been said, of Hamlet), with his melancholy "compounded of many simples"; Sir Toby Belch, champion of the ancient doctrine of cakes and ale, and ginger hot in the mouth; the unspeakable Sir Andrew Ague-cheek; the solemn prig and egotist Malvolio, smirking and pointing at his cross-garters; Maria, "youngest wren of nine"; and the clown Feste, with his marvellous haunting songs. All these and dozens more move here in a kaleidoscope of intense life, spiritualized by an indescribable poetic radiance.

Change in the Spirit of his Work: the Sonnets.

These three comedies were written between 1598 and 1601, that is between the poet's thirty-fourth and his thirty-seventh year. The last of them, *Twelfth Night*, has been called his "farewell to mirth." What happened to him at this time, or whether anything external and tangible happened, we shall never know. Certain it is, however, that in eight tragedies, four of them of titanic size, and in two so-called comedies, almost more bitter and gloomy than the tragedies, he sounded one after another the depths of human baseness, sin, and suffering. The only hint that we have of the nature of that valley and shadow through which Shakespeare seems to have passed, is found in his *Sonnets*. These were not published until 1609, after this period was over; and we know that some of them were written before 1598, when the poet's spiritual harmony, as reflected in his plays, was still undisturbed. There is nothing, however, in either of these facts to disprove the hypothesis that those sonnets in which we see the most acute suffering expressed, may mark the beginning and progress of the period in question. They are addressed to "a man right fair" and "a woman colored

ill." What the exact relations were between the three can only be guessed at. It has been plausibly conjectured that the "Dark Lady" of the *Sonnets* was the evil genius of Shakespeare's life, and that to her was chiefly due the change in his spirit and in his art. Of course it must be admitted that no such personal explanation of this change is needed. The poet's sympathy was so all-embracing, and his outlook on life so broad, that the darker aspects of human character and destiny had sooner or later, in the natural course of things, to absorb his attention. Whatever may be their personal bearing, however, the *Sonnets* are of inexhaustible interest, for the subtlety and depth of their thought, and for the curious mixture of oddity and artificiality, with transcendent beauty and power, in their expression. If Shakespeare had written nothing but these, he would still be a commanding figure in the literature of the English race.

The plays of this period fall into three groups; the Roman plays, *Julius Cæsar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*; the so-called comedies, *Measure for Measure* and *Troïlus and Cressida*; and the tragedies, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *King Lear*. *Timon of Athens* stands, as we shall see, somewhat apart.

The Roman Plays.

In *Julius Cæsar*, the hero is in one sense not Cæsar, but Brutus, in whom the poet saw a political idealist and generous dreamer, used as a tool by selfish men, who bring overwhelming disaster upon the state by their murder of the only man strong enough to save it. In another sense, the hero is Cæsar's spirit after death, "ranging for revenge," and letting "slip the dogs of war" to bring the world to ruin. In *Coriolanus*, the second Roman play, Shakespeare poured out his contempt for the "mob," the fickle, many-headed multitude, played upon by demagogues, and working its own destruction in its hatred of those who refuse to flatter and amuse it. In *Antony and Cleopatra* he showed the character of a great Roman general, crumbling before the breath of Eastern

luxury and sensuality, personified in Cleopatra, the "worm of old Nile."

In *Measure for Measure* Shakespeare struck at the hypocrisy of a man high-placed in office and posing as a severe moralist, who nevertheless yields to the very sin he punishes most ruthlessly in others. In *Troilus and Cressida* he drew a picture of faithlessness in love, a picture so cynical, so fierce in its bitterness, that it is almost impossible to think of it as the work of the hand which drew Juliet, Portia, and Rosalind; and at the same time he deformed the heroic figures of Homeric legend with savage burlesque.

The "Dark and Bitter Comedies."

In Hamlet, the first of the four great tragedies which form the "captain jewels in the carcanet" of the master's work, we have the spectacle of a sensitive and highly intellectual youth, endowed with all the gifts which make for greatness of living, suddenly confronted with the knowledge that his father has been murdered, and that his mother has married the murderer. Even before the revelation comes, Hamlet feels himself to be living in an alien moral world, and is haunted by dark misgivings. When his father's ghost appears to him, with its imperative injunction to revenge, Hamlet takes his resolution instantly. His feigned madness, an element of the drama retained by Shakespeare from the old story whence he drew the plot, is the first device which Hamlet hits upon to aid him in his dangerous duty. In spite of the endless debate concerning the reality of Hamlet's madness, there is no room for question in the matter. Not only is he perfectly sane, but his handling of the difficult situation in which he finds himself is in all points swift and masterful. He gives up his love for Ophelia because he cannot take her with him into the dark pass which he is compelled to enter; and the scathing satire which he pours out upon her when he fancies her in league with Polonius and the king to play the

Hamlet.

spy upon him, gathers its force from the greatness of the renunciation he has made. His scheme for proving the king's guilt beyond a peradventure, by means of the strolling players, is consummated with ingenious skill. His dealings with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are those of a gifted man of action, to whose resolute will thought is a swift minister. The core of his purpose is always firm; and it is one of the ironies of circumstance that Hamlet has come to stand in most minds for a type of irresolution. This misunderstanding of the character is largely due to the exaltation of excitement in Hamlet, which causes his mind, even in the moment when he is pursuing his purpose with most intentness, to play with feverish brilliancy over the questions of man's life and death; which makes his throbbing, white-hot imagination a meeting-place for grotesque and extravagant fancies; and which leads him, so to speak, to cover the solid framework of his enterprise with a wild festoonery of intellectual whim, to envelop it in fitful eloquence, swift and subtle wit, contemptuous irony, and mordant satire. Yet this is merely the by-play of his mind, the volatilized substance which escapes under the heat of excitement. In the midst of it he remains perfectly master of himself and of his means, a supremely rational, competent, and determined being, a prince and master of men, dedicated irrevocably to ruin in the moral chaos where the "cursed spite" of his destiny has thrown him. With a miraculous art, Shakespeare has depicted this character, not fixed in outline, but changing and palpitant as life itself; so that it constantly eludes our definition, and seems forever passing from one state of being into another, in the passion of its struggle.

Othello has a certain affinity to *Hamlet* in that here also the hero's soul is thrown into violent perturbation by the discovery of evil poisoning the very sources of his life. In Othello's case the pathos and the tragedy are heightened by the fact that the evil exists

"Othello."

only in the hero's imagination, into which we see the demon-like Iago pouring, drop by drop, the poison of suspicion. Othello is not by nature jealous. Desdemona in answer to Emilia's question, "Is he not jealous?" says,

> "Who, he? I think the sun, where he was born
> Drew all such humors from him,"

and he everywhere shows himself "of an open and free nature," incapable of petty suspicion. But when Iago, working cautiously, with diabolic skill, has at last convinced him that Desdemona is false, the fatal rage which seizes him is an hysterical reaction from the sickening blow of disillusion. The real centre of gravity in the play is Iago, with his "honest" manners, his blunt speech, his downright materialistic philosophy, his plausible zeal in his master's service; underneath all which his real nature lies coiled like a snake, waiting for a chance to sting.

In *Macbeth*, Shakespeare depicted the passion of ambition working in a nature morally weak, but endowed with an intense poetic susceptibility. Macbeth is a dreamer and a sentimentalist, capable of conceiving vividly the goal of his evil desires, but incapable either of resolute action in attaining them or of a ruthless enjoyment of them when attained. By the murder of the king, Macbeth is plunged into a series of crimes, in which he persists with a kind of faltering desperation, until he falls before the accumulated vengeance, material and ghostly, raised up to punish him. As, in Antony and Cleopatra, we are shown the slow degeneration of the hero's character under the slavery of sense, so here we behold the break-up of a soul under the torture of its own sick imagination. The ghost of Banquo, shaking its gory locks at Macbeth from its seat at the banquet table, is a symbol of the spiritual distemper which results from the working of a tyrannous imagination upon a nature morally unprovided. The witch-hags who meet Macbeth on the heath are concrete embodiments of the powers of

evil, summoned from the four corners of the air by affinity with the evil heart of the schemer. Shakespeare did not, of course, consciously strive after symbolism in these things. It does not seem impossible, indeed, that he believed in ghosts and witches, as did the great mass of men in his day, from King James down. It is certain that he was interested in his story, here and elsewhere, as a piece of life rather than as a moral symbol; his work is full of types and symbols simply because life itself is full of them.

Beside Macbeth Shakespeare has placed a woman who possesses all the masculine qualities which the hero lacks, but who is nevertheless intensely feminine in her devotion to her lord's interest, and in her inability to endure the strain of a criminal life after his support has been withdrawn from her. Her will, though majestic when in the prosperous service of her husband's ambition, collapses in sudden ruin when he fails to rise to the responsibilities of their grim situation. Macbeth's feebler moral substance crumbles piecemeal; but the firm structure of his wife's spirit, as soon as its natural foundation is destroyed, falls by instant overthrow.

King Lear is often put at the apex of Shakespeare's achievement, and by many judges at the head of the dramatic literature of the world. The story was as old as Geoffrey of Monmouth (see page 24), and, like so many of the themes which Shakespeare handled, had already been made the subject of a play, a crude effort by some nameless playwright during the experimental stage of Elizabethan drama. Here, as was his constant custom, Shakespeare followed the main lines of the story given him, and incorporated into his grand edifice every bit of usable material from the building of his predecessor. Here too, as always in Shakespeare if we pierce to the core of his meaning, the real tragedy is a spiritual one. Lear is an imperious nature, wayward by temperament, and made more incapable of self-government by long indulgence of its passionate whims. At the opening of the play, we see

"King Lear."

him striving to find a refuge from himself by surrendering all his wealth and power in exchange for absolute love. The heart of the old king demands love; love is the element upon which it subsists, and age, instead of abating this hunger, has made the craving more imperious. He demands love not only in the spirit but in the letter, and thrusts his youngest daughter Cordelia from him with cruel brusqueness, when she refuses to use the terms of extravagant hyperbole to describe her affection. Shakespeare has made this same brusque and hasty spirit of the king precipitate upon his old head the enmity of his remaining daughters, Goneril and Regan. Before he has recovered from the shock of Cordelia's defection, this awful pair of daughters lay bare, little by little, their monstrous souls to their father's gaze. As in *Othello*, the result of the revelation is to unhinge for the sufferer the very order of nature. As if in sympathy with the chaos in Lear's soul, the elements break loose; and in the pauses of the blast we hear the noise of violent crimes, curses, heart-broken jesting, the chatter of idiocy, and the wandering tongue of madness. The sentimentalist's phrase, "poetic justice," has no meaning for Shakespeare. The ruin wrought in the old king's heart and brain is irreparable, and the tornado which whirls him to his doom carries with it the just and the unjust. The little golden pause of peace, when Lear and Cordelia are united, is followed by the intolerably piercing scene in which he bears her dead body out of the prison, muttering that they have hanged his "poor fool." The consequences of rash action, heartlessly taken advantage of, were never followed out to a grimmer end.

End of Shakespeare's "Period of Gloom."

Timon of Athens, the last play of the period we have been traversing, has little of the insight and poetic splendor which we associate with Shakespeare's name. It has no relieving touches such as soften and humanize the tragedies just discussed. It is a

kind of summing up of the pessimistic view of life, in the person of Timon, the misanthrope, whose savage rhetoric is poured out upon the selfishness and baseness of men.

The plays which mark the closing period of Shakespeare's life are pure romances, conceived in a spirit of deep and lovely serenity, and characterized by a silvery delicacy, a tender musing touch, which is new in the poet's work. This is less true of *Cymbeline*, the first of the group, than of *A Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*; but even in *Cymbeline* the new mood is apparent, in the exquisite picture of Imogen, and in the woodland scenes between Arviragus and the young princes. It is still more apparent in the pastoral under-play in *A Winter's Tale*, where Prince Florizel woos Perdita, the wild-flower maid. It shines out full-orbed in *The Tempest*, where Prospero sways with his magic the elements and the wills of men to his bidding, in the service of his daughter's happiness. In this play all the powers of the master meet together; the grace that had created the fairy world of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the lyric passion that had breathed through Juliet's lips on her bridal morning, the drollery and wit that had set the laughter of centuries billowing about Falstaff, the titanic might that had sent a world crashing on the head of Lear —all meet together here, but curbed, softened, silvered down into exquisite harmony. **His Last Plays.**

The Tempest is believed to have been written for the wedding ceremonies of Princess Elizabeth, daughter of James I., and Prince Frederick, the Elector Palatine, in 1613. If this is true (and it seems now to be beyond reasonable doubt), *The Tempest* was Shakespeare's farewell to his art. When scarcely fifty years of age, with his genius at its ripest, and every faculty of his mind in full play, he laid down his pen forever; as Prospero, at the end, abjures his magic, breaks his wand, and drowns his book "deeper than did ever **"The Tempest."**

plummet sound." One is tempted to indulge the fanciful parallel still further, and to think of Ariel, the delicate and potent sprite whom Prospero sets free, as the spirit of Imagination, now released from its long labors in the master's service.

Appreciation of Shakespeare in his Day.

The common opinion that Shakespeare was unappreciated by his own generation, is only partly true. If other evidence were lacking to prove the esteem in which he was held, his material prosperity would be sufficient to show at least his high popularity with the theatre-going public. But there is witness that his genius was in tolerable measure recognized. His great anti-type and rival, Ben Jonson, whose burly good sense was not prone to exaggeration, and who perhaps never quite conquered a feeling of jealousy toward Shakespeare, wrote for the first collective edition of the plays, published in 1623, a eulogy full of deep, in places even passionate, admiration; and afterward said of him in a passage of moving sincerity, "I did love and honor him, on this side idolatry, as much as any." The most significant hint we have of his personal charm is in the adjective which is constantly applied to him by his friends, "gentle," a word also often used to describe his art, in allusion evidently to its humanity and poetic grace.

His Carelessness of Fame.

The awe inspired by the almost unearthly power and richness of Shakespeare's mind is apt to be deepened by the knowledge that the noble plays to which English-speaking races point as their greatest single achievement, were thrown into the world carelessly, and would have perished altogether if the author of them had had his way. During his lifetime they were printed only in pirated editions, taken down by shorthand from the lips of the players, or patched up from prompter's manuscripts dishonestly acquired. He does not mention his plays in his will. Not until seven years after his death did a collective edition appear (known as the First Folio), and then

only because of the piety of two of his actor-friends. Those ill-inspired persons who would ascribe the plays of Shakespeare to Francis Bacon, make this carelessness of his fame on the poet's part a chief support of their argument. If we were compelled to explain Shakespeare's case on practical grounds, it would be easy to do so. The printing of a play while it was still actable, was disadvantageous to the company whose property it was; and Shakespeare had probably made over his plays to his company as they were produced. Notwithstanding, when all this is taken into consideration, we are yet filled with astonishment. We see in the working of the master's spirit not only the vast liberality, but the startling carelessness of Nature, who seems with infinite loving pains to create her marvels, and then to turn listlessly away while they are given over to destruction.

CHAPTER VII

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: SHAKESPEARE'S CONTEMPORARIES AND SUCCESSORS IN THE DRAMA

In the preceding chapter, we regarded Shakespeare as standing alone, in order that by isolating his work we might better see its absolute qualities. We must now turn to those playwrights who worked at the same time and in many cases side by side with him, and try to get some notion of the wonderful variety of the drama during its period of full bloom. Afterward we must trace briefly the steps by which the drama declined, both by inner decay and outward opposition, until, in 1642, at the beginning of the great Civil War, the doors of the theatres were closed, not to open again until the Restoration, eighteen years later.

Ben Jonson.

The most commanding figure in the group of Shakespeare's dramatic contemporaries is Ben Jonson (1573–1637). Although of humble birth, the son of a bricklayer, he was sent to Westminster School and possibly to Cambridge; and he ultimately became one of the most learned men of his time. As a young man he served a campaign with the English army in Flanders, where (as he afterward boasted) he fought a duel with a champion of the enemy in the sight of both armies, and took from him his arms, in the classic manner. The incident is highly characteristic of Jonson's rugged and domineering character. As he served the Flemish soldier, he afterward served the luckless poets and poetasters who challenged him to a war of words.

After returning to England, he began to work for the theatres. His first play was *Every Man in His Humour*

(1597), in which Shakespeare is known to have acted. A series of literary quarrels followed, in the course of which he wrote several elaborate plays, *The Poetaster*, *Cynthia's Revels*, etc., to revenge himself upon his rather puny enemies. His four masterpieces appeared between 1605 and 1614. They are *The Silent Woman*, *Volpone*, *The Alchemist*, and *Bartholomew Fair*,—all called comedies by him, though the second is a gloomy and biting satire, and the last a pure farce. He also wrote two massive tragedies taken from Roman history, *Sejanus* and *Cataline*. For many years after his appointment by James I. as poet-laureate, he supplied the king with court-masques, little spectacle-plays delicate in fancy and rich in lyric tracery, which were acted at Whitehall by gorgeously costumed lords and ladies, amid magnificent stage-settings contrived by the king's architect, Inigo Jones, with the lyrics set to music by the king's musician, Ferrabosco.

Jonson's work as a dramatist was in sharp contrast with that of all his contemporaries. In the first place he set himself squarely against the romantic tendency of his day, and threw the whole weight of his powerful intellect, his great learning and invention, into the task of converting the drama to classicism. He took up the line of development which had been begun in *Gorboduc*, *Ralph Royster Doyster*, and other plays written when the influence of Seneca and Plautus was at its height; and he fought all his life long a single-handed battle against what he judged to be the ignorant preference of the public for the romantic form. Not only did he stand out for the classical "unities" (see page 95) but he made war upon the fantastic and extravagant qualities of romantic imagination, and labored to supplant them by classical sanity and restraint. Anything further than *Every Man in His Humour* from *Twelfth Night* or *The Tempest*, it would be difficult to imagine. The latter are full of glancing imagination and irresponsible fancy; the for-

Jonson's Classicism.

mer moves in the prose light of every day, and deals with everyday London characters in a straightforward methodical fashion. The work of the two poets in historical tragedy, offers even a stronger contrast. Shakespeare, in dealing with an epoch of the past, works with the free hand of the romanticist; even where he keeps closest to the actual facts of history, as in *Julius Cæsar*, he cares chiefly to create breathing men and women, and takes little trouble to give a faithful picture of the times. The historical plays of Jonson, on the other hand, are monuments of learning; they attempt to be scrupulously faithful, in historical details, to the period portrayed. Shakespeare and the romantic school fling the most riotous fun, the most farcical nonsense, into the midst of tragic action; with Jonson and his school it is a point of honor to keep the dignity of tragic action unimpaired by such intrusion.

"Every Man in His Humour."

Another peculiarity of Jonson's art is hinted at by the title of his first play, *Every Man in His Humour*. The word "humor" was a cant term in his day,* equivalent to "whim" or "foible." He hit upon the device of endowing each one of his characters with some particular whim or affectation, some ludicrous exaggeration of manner, speech, or dress; and of so thrusting forward this single odd trait that all others might be lost sight of. Every man, in other words, should be "in his humor." This working principle Jonson extended afterward in his two great comedies, *Volpone* and *The Alchemist*. In *Volpone* he studied, not a foible or whim, but a master-passion, the passion of greed, as it affects a whole social group; in *The Alchemist* he made an elaborate study of human gullibility. There is doubtless something mechanical in this method of going to work according to a set programme. Shakespeare also has devoted whole plays to the study of a master-passion,—in *Othello* that of jealousy, in *Macbeth* that of ambition.

* Note Bardolph's use of the word in *Henry IV.* and *Henry V.*

But he does this in a very different way from Jonson; with much more variety, surprise, and free play of life. Jonson has, as it were, a thesis to illustrate, and holds up one character after another, as a logician presents the various parts of his argument. In other words, he always, or nearly always, lets us see the machinery. But while he thus loses in spontaneity, he gains in intellectual unity and in massiveness of purpose.

Jonson's Realism.

In at least one respect the comedies of Ben Jonson are the most interesting plays in the whole Elizabethan repertory,—namely, in the vivid pictures they give of contemporary London life. Other dramatists took up the notion later, and did admirable work of the kind. Dekker, in his *Shoemakers' Holiday*, and Middleton in his *Roaring Girl* and other plays, mirrored freshly and faithfully the society immediately about them; but Jonson seems to have been the pioneer in this respect, *Every Man in His Humour* probably antedating even *Henry IV.*, Shakespeare's triumphant essay in this form of realism. From Jonson's comedies alone it would be possible to reconstruct whole areas of Elizabethan society; a study of them is indispensable if one would know the brilliant and amusing surface of the most sociable era of English history. At least one of Jonson's comedies, too, gives this close and realistic study of manners with a gayety and grace fairly rivalling Shakespeare; the *Silent Woman* is one of the most sparkling comedies ever written, full of splendid fun, and with a bright, quick movement which never flags.

His Lyric Gift.

Jonson's lyric gift, for its delicacy and sweetness, was conspicuous even in the Elizabethan age, when almost every writer was capable of turning off a charming song. The best known of his lyrics are "Drink to me only with thine eyes," and "See the chariot at hand here of love"; of both these the old-time music has fortunately reached us. Jonson was also a critic of

great sanity and force, writing a perfectly simple and unadorned prose, very different from the elaborate and figurative prose-style practised by his contemporaries. His volume of short reflections upon life and art, entitled *Timber*, shows in an attractive guise the solidity, aggressiveness, and downright honesty of his mind.

Jonson as a Literary Dictator.

It was chiefly these qualities of aggressive decision and rugged honesty which enabled him to hold for a quarter of a century his position of literary dictator, and lord of the "tavern-wits." The tavern was for the seventeenth century what the coffee-house was for the eighteenth, a rallying place for literary men; and Jonson is almost as typical a tavern figure as Falstaff. His "mountain belly and his rocky face," his genial, domineering personality, ruled by royal right the bohemian circle which gathered at "The Mermaid" or "The Devil," where the young fellows of the "tribe of Ben" heard words

> "So nimble and so full of subtle flame
> As if that every one from whence they came
> Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
> And had resolved to live a fool the rest
> Of his dull life." *

Here took place those famous wit-combats between Jonson and Shakespeare, described by Fuller under the simile of a sea-fight; Jonson, slow of movement and "high built in learning," being likened to a great Spanish galleon, Shakespeare to an English man-of-war, swift to strike and dart away, confounding the enemy with agility and adroitness.

The qualities for which Ben Jonson demands admiration are rather of the solid than the brilliant kind. In an age of imaginative license he preached the need of restraint; in an age of hasty, careless workmanship he preached the need of sound construction and good finish. He was a safe

* Verses entitled "Master Francis Beaumont to Ben Jonson."

guide; if the younger dramatists of his day had heeded him, the drama would not have gone on, as it did, deepening in extravagance and license until it died, so to speak, of dissipation. But except for his effect upon the lyric poetry of Herrick and the Cavalier song-writers, his direct influence was small. He stood outside the great wave of romantic feeling, of which Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton mark the successive crests; and when he died in 1637, broken down and embittered, the triumph of classicism seemed far off indeed. The movement which he had started, however, went on, through indirect and often obscure channels, until its culmination in Dryden and Pope. The seeds of eighteenth century classicism are to be found in Jonson's work.

Thomas Dekker.

Of the life of Thomas Dekker almost nothing is known. The date of his birth is guessed to be between 1570 and 1577, and he is entirely lost sight of a few years before the outbreak of the Civil War. But though next to nothing is known of him, his individuality is so distinctly reflected in his plays, that he seems one of the most definite figures of his time,—a sunny, light-hearted nature, full of real even if somewhat disorderly genius. *The Shoemakers' Holiday* (written before 1599), perhaps his earliest play, is his best. It is a study of London apprentice life, woven about a slender but charming love-story. The master-shoemaker, Simon Eyre, and his wife Margery, are drawn with a broad exuberant humor wholly captivating. *The Shoemakers' Holiday* has in it all the morning gladness and freshness of the Elizabethan temper. Dekker wrote one other charming play, *Old Fortunatus*, a dramatized fairy-tale of the wishing-hat and exhaustless purse. It is a chaotic piece of work, but its incoherence rather adds to than detracts from the dreamy nursery-tale effect. The later work of Dekker, most of it done in collaboration with other playwrights, is much more serious. It is as if he had fallen under the shadow of gloom begin-

ning to steal over England, presaging the storm and stress of the Civil War.

Thomas Heywood.

Thomas Heywood is another dramatist whose history is almost a blank. He was probably born about the same time as Dekker, and seems to have been alive in 1648. His life therefore spans the whole period of the drama from Marlowe to Shirley. He was immensely productive, declaring himself to have "a whole hand or a main finger in two hundred and twenty plays." He must in fairness be judged as a dramatic journalist, in an age when the theatre tried to do what the newspaper and the lecture hall now accomplish, rather than as a dramatist in the more dignified and permanent sense. In one direction, however, Heywood achieved mastery, namely, in the drama of simple domestic life. His most famous play of this nature is *A Woman Killed with Kindness*. Here for once Heywood handled his subject with noble simplicity, with deep tragic effect, and with a truth and sweetness of moral tone, which justify Charles Lamb's saying that Heywood is "a prose Shakespeare." In the drama of domestic life mixed with adventure, Heywood is also successful, though in a less supreme degree. Perhaps the best example of this type of play to be found among his works is *The Fair Maid of the West*, in which there are some capital vignettes of life in an English seaport town, as well as some delightfully breezy melodramatic sea-fighting.

Thomas Middleton.

Thomas Middleton (1570–1627) was a man of much larger calibre. He developed slowly, but his work shows to the very last a steady gain in power and sweetness. By his frank contact with life as it is, and by his continual effort to see life in its plainness and entirety, he attained at last to a grasp and insight which place him among the great names of the English stage. He had no university training, but was entered at Gray's Inn in 1593. His life about the law courts gave him

an intimate knowledge of the shady side of the metropolis, which was of great service to him when he began, about 1607, to write realistic comedies. Of these the best is perhaps *A Trick to Catch the Old One.* His transition from comedy to tragedy is marked by the very interesting play, *A Fair Quarrel,* in which the noble seriousness of certain scenes, and the fine dramatic ring of the verse, herald the approach of his complete maturity. It was between 1620 and his death in 1627, that is, when over fifty, that he wrote the two plays, *The Changeling* and *Women Beware Women,* in which his sturdy powers show themselves fully ripened.

The "Tragedy of Blood."

Both *The Changeling* and *Women Beware Women* are unpleasant in plot, and marred by the obtrusion of crude horrors. They belong in fact to a peculiar type of drama, vastly relished by Elizabethan audiences but repellent to modern taste, called by literary historians the "tragedy of blood." Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* began the type, Marlowe in the *Jew of Malta,* and Shakespeare in *Titus Andronicus,* continued it. Indeed, *Hamlet* and *Lear* are really in plot "tragedies of blood," though spiritualized out of all inner resemblance to the species. As we shall see later, John Webster's two masterpieces are pure "tragedies of blood," making use of the element of physical terror in season and out of season. Middleton was therefore the victim of his age in this respect, as he was also in the moral violence, the selection of strained and painful situations, which mar the two plays under consideration. When they were written, the decadence of the drama had set in; and Middleton was not great enough to hold his work altogether above the swift downward trend of the stage at the time. But both *The Changeling* and *Women Beware Women,* are studded with fine poetry, fine in feeling and supremely fine in expression. Middleton learned, better than any of Shakespeare's fellows, the secret of the master's diction. With-

out imitating the Shakespearean manner, he handles language, at his best, with the same superb confidence; and this is true of his comic prose as well as of his serious blank verse.

Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher are, in Lowell's phrase, among "the double stars of the heavens of poetry."

Beaumont and Fletcher.

Fletcher, the elder of the two, was the son of a Bishop of London, through whom the young dramatist gained an unusual insight into court life. None of Fletcher's fellows knew so well as he how to paint the hollow inside, and the exquisite outer finish, of courtly manners. Another fact contributing to form his genius, was that the official residence of his father, the episcopal palace at Fulham, lay amid beautiful river and forest scenery. To the country memories gathered here in boyhood he gave expression later in the pastoral play of *The Faithful Shepherdess*, as well as in the songs with which his dramas are richly interspersed.

At the Mermaid tavern, among those "sealed of the tribe of Ben," he met the man whose name is inseparably linked with his own. Francis Beaumont was seven years younger than Fletcher, being about twenty-one at the time of their meeting. After their partnership began, tradition says that they lived together on the Bankside, sharing everything, even their clothing, in common. This at least represents a more essential truth, that they entered into a singularly effective intellectual partnership; one mind supplying what the other lacked, to produce a result of full and balanced beauty. The closeness with which the work of the two is intertwined, is shown by the fact that although Fletcher outlived Beaumont by nine years, and the latter had no hand at all in forty of the fifty-odd plays that go under their common name, attempts to isolate the genius of one from the other by comparison of the Fletcher plays with the Beaumont-Fletcher group, have led equally well-

Their Intellectual Partnership.

equipped critics into exactly opposite conclusions. The weight of opinion, however, seems to be that Beaumont had the deeper and more serious imagination, and the greater constructive power; and that Fletcher excelled chiefly in lyric sweetness, rhetorical fluency, and many-colored sentiment. Beaumont died in the same year as Shakespeare (1616); his co-laborer lived until the accession of Charles I., in 1625.

Among the plays jointly written, the best are perhaps *Philaster* and *The Maid's Tragedy*. The theme of *Philaster* is a common one in the old drama, the same, for instance, as that of *Cymbeline*, namely, the unfounded jealousy of a lover, and the unswerving faithfulness of his love, who follows him in the disguise of a page. This situation, with its almost inexhaustible resources of romance, is handled with extreme grace; and the play contains perhaps more passages of pure poetry than any other in the authors' long list. *The Maid's Tragedy* is dramatically more powerful. The soul of the hero is torn between his sense of personal honor, and his sense of the inviolable divinity of the king who has shamefully wronged him; the latter feeling, though difficult for us to conceive, being easily comprehensible under the Stuart kings. In spite of its power, or perhaps because of it, the play exhibits nearly all of those qualities which denote in Beaumont and Fletcher the beginning of the dramatic decadence. It shows us clearly that we have passed out of the age of Elizabeth into that of James I.

"The Maid's Tragedy."

In the first place, there is in *The Maid's Tragedy*, and in the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher in general, an obvious straining after "intensity." In a sense, to be sure, the search after intensity is often present even in the Elizabethan drama at its freshest and strongest. We have only to think of the typical characters and situations of Marlowe and Shakespeare, to realize this fact. But the intensity of the later drama is different; it is more fever-

ish and artificial. As the obviously "strong" situations began to be worked out, dramatists made excursions into the strained and the exceptional, in order to find novel matter. A second and more fatal flaw in Beaumont and Fletcher is the laxity of the moral atmosphere pervading much of their work. The moral values are not preserved with the absolute health of soul which is Shakespeare's greatest glory, but are apt to be blurred or distorted in the endeavor after piquancy and novelty.

These defects have been dwelt upon because they are symptomatic of the change already beginning; a change destined to destroy the drama from within, even if it had not been crushed by its Puritan enemies from without. But it would be a great mistake to conceive of Beaumont and Fletcher in this merely negative light, without holding in mind their great positive qualities. They are "absolute lords of a goodly realm of romance;" and the plays that go under their common name, for splendor and charm are perhaps not to be paralleled in any single body of Renaissance drama, outside of that of Shakespeare himself.

John Webster.

In John Webster we encounter the phenomenon of a really great poet,—one who in sheer power of expression comes nearest to Shakespeare of all the men of that generation except Middleton,—devoting himself to melodrama of the most gory and unrestrained description. His two greatest plays, *The White Devil* (1612) and *The Duchess of Malfi* (acted 1616), push the devices of physical horror to their farthest limit. They show the "tragedy of blood" in its most developed form, and employ all the grisly paraphernalia of the madhouse, the graveyard, and the shambles, as well as the agencies of moral terror, to wring from the drama all the crude excitement it is capable of giving. The subject-matter of Webster, therefore, is as far as possible from appealing to modern taste. But his power of conceiving character, and still more the sur-

prising poetry, now wild and stormy, now tender and lyrical, now pungently epigrammatic, which he puts into the mouths of his people, have kept his fame intact, in spite of the repellent form of play he chose to exhibit these gifts upon. Of the two plays named above, *The Duchess of Malfi* is the finer. Webster not only shows in it a much firmer stagecraft than in his earlier effort, but he also reveals powers of gayety and playfulness, and an understanding of the heart, hardly to be looked for from one who voluntarily elected the tragedy of blood as his medium. At least two of the characters, the Duchess of Malfi and her husband Antonio, are robust and healthy figures, who even under the stress of torture keep their broad quiet humanity. They show what Webster might have done if he had been born under a luckier star.

War between Actors and Puritans.

Early in the history of the drama a war began to be waged between the actors and the Puritans. In 1576 we hear of strolling companies being kept out of London by Puritan law-makers; and when the first theatres were erected they were placed in the suburbs to the north, and in the "liberties," or exempt lands, across the Thames in Southwark. Under Queen Elizabeth's protection the actors grew strong enough to enter the city; and as long as her strong hand was at the helm, the Puritans did not assert themselves very vigorously. But when James I. came to the throne, with his lack of personal dignity, his bigoted dictum of the divine right of kings, his immoral court full of greedy nobles from Scotland and Spain, the Puritan party gained rapidly in aggressiveness. The thing which the Puritans hated most under the sun, after copes and crucifixes, was the theatre, because it was in the theatre that the "lust of the eye and the pride of life" found fullest expression. Naturally therefore, as the Puritan disapproval grew more severe, the dramatists drew away from the London burgesses, and appealed in the tone and matter of their plays more and more

to the corrupt taste of the court,—a fact to which the rapid degeneration of the drama was in large part due.

Phillip Massinger.

It has been thought from certain passages in the plays of Phillip Massinger (1583–1640), as well as from their general tone, that he was at heart a Puritan, not in the narrow political sense, but as the term applies to men of high moral ideals, to whom the things that make for righteousness are the first concern, and the shows and passions of life, by comparison, unreal. By some ironic fate, Massinger was born a dramatic poet at a time when the stage, to live at all, had to appeal to the jaded taste of a court. He spins his plots of worldly passion and ambition, therefore, but without real interest in them. When wickedness is required he forces his characters duly into wickedness, and in the effort to overcome the bias of his mind, makes them very wicked indeed. But it is when he has a chance to treat some theme of self-sacrifice, of loyalty, of gratitude, of unworldly renunciation in the interest of an ideal, as in *The Great Duke of Florence*, *The Virgin Martyr*, and *The Maid of Honour*, that he shows himself to be a real poet, and handles his subject with placid dignity and power. He also achieved at least one great success in comedy, in his *New Way to Pay Old Debts*. The character of the miser and extortioner in this play, Sir Giles Overreach, holds a place among the classic figures of the English stage.

In John Ford (1586–1640?) the search after abnormal situations reached its height on the moral and spiritual side, as it had done in Webster on the physical side. Ford was a man of means, not compelled to write hastily in order to gain an uncertain livelihood from the stage. His plays are good in form and his blank verses excellent. But while his work shows no sign of degeneration in respect to form, his deliberate turning away from the healthy and normal in human life, and the strange morbid melancholy which shadows his work, betray very plainly that he is of the decadence.

The great procession of dramatic poets which begins with Marlowe comes to an end with James Shirley (1596–1666). In him we detect a constant attempt to eke out his own scanty invention by imitating his predecessors. His work has, in other words, the "literary" quality, as distinguished from original inspiration. This criticism, however, applies chiefly to his tragedies. In comedy he struck out a type of extreme interest as being a direct forerunner of the Restoration comedy. The best one for study is *Hyde Park*, where some of the scenes are laid in the famous park during the progress of a horse-racing exhibition; it would take only a slight change here and there to convince us that we are among the gallants and dames of the time of Charles II., or even of Queen Anne. The dialogue is in prose, the language perfectly everyday and realistic; instead of the long monologues and rhetorical passages of the earlier romantic comedy, there is a quick bandying of the shuttlecock of talk. The tone is that of a frivolous, gossipy age, not much in earnest about anything, and given over to the cult of fashion.

James Shirley.

When we remember that *Hyde Park* was written on the eve of the most tremendous upheaval which English society has ever witnessed, this frivolity of tone becomes significant. It marks the point of extreme departure from the Puritan temper. So long as the dramatists were in earnest, even in the portrayal of those things which to the Puritan mind were abominations, there was a bond of sympathy. What the Puritan could not stand, was the gay insincerity, the airy trifling with the essential facts of life, such as Shirley's comedies exemplify. After the election of the Long Parliament, the Puritan party quickly came to a reckoning with the theatre. In 1641 appeared a pamphlet called "The Stage-Players' Complaint," which says pathetically, "The High Commission Court is down, the Star-Chamber is down, and some think Bishops will down; but why should not we then that are far inferior to any of these, justly

fear that we should be down too?" In September of 1 an ordinance of both Houses of Parliament closed the t tres throughout the kingdom. They were not reope until eighteen years later, when the reins of power fallen from the dead hand of Cromwell, and Charles ascended the throne from which his father had been le the scaffold.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: NON-DRAMATIC LITERATURE BEFORE THE RESTORATION

THE drama, as has been shown, declines from Shakespeare by plainly marked stages; as in its growth it was highly organic, so in its decay the break-up of the organism progressed rapidly and logically. But with non-dramatic literature between the death of Elizabeth and the Restoration, 1603–1660, the case is different. Here we find the greatest confusion, the most bewildering variety of mood, of manner, and of artistic aim. The reasons for this confused character of seventeenth century literature were chiefly two. In the first place, the age was one of great religious excitement, of violent social and political change. The country was torn by warring factions, one supporting the established church, the divine right of kings, and all the institutions of the old social order; the other demanding a severance of the church from the state, and the submission of the king to parliament. The result of this conflict was the Civil War, which drenched the country in blood, unsettled all the foundations of society, and gave to literature the uncertainty, the feverish groping, characteristic of a transition time. In the second place, literary criticism had hardly begun to exist, and there was nothing to check the reign of individual whim and romantic exaggeration which the Renaissance had instituted. Sidney, it is true, had done some valuable work in criticism, and Ben Jonson continued through the first forty years of the century to exert a restraining influence upon the lawless imaginations of his

General Character of the Period.

time; but even Jonson could do little to check the prevailing anarchy of form and thought. The typical prose of the century is over-colored, elaborate, wayward, inattentive to form. The typical poetry is extravagant, whimsical, with sudden beauties breaking forth from obscurity and mannerism. Yet such is the contradictory character of the era, that it produced, in Herrick and the Cavalier song-writers, some of the most exquisite minor workmen, and in Milton, the greatest formal master, among English poets; and in Bacon and Bunyan it gave to English prose supreme examples of terse and simple style. Finally, the literature of the whole era is characterized by a mood of deep seriousness, or by some attempt to escape from this prevailing mood. It is full of bold speculation, of lofty and often melancholy meditation upon life and death, natural to an age which experienced profound religious emotion at the same time that it saw the rise of modern scientific thought.

Bacon; his Life and Character.

Francis Bacon, to whom the beginnings of modern science are in great part due, was born in 1561, three years before Shakespeare. His father was Lord Keeper of the Great Seal to Elizabeth, and his uncle was Lord Burleigh, Elizabeth's prime-minister. He was thus marked out by birth for a public career; and he threw himself into the strife for place, with the keen intellectual zest and the moral ruthlessness characteristic of the Renaissance courtier. Owing to the opposition of his jealous uncle, he got little preferment under the queen; but under James I. he rose rapidly through various offices to be Lord Chancellor, with the title of Viscount St. Albans. In this position he supported his dignities by a magnificence of living altogether out of proportion to his legitimate income. In 1621 he was impeached before the House of Lords for bribe-taking and corruption in office, found guilty, and subjected to fine and imprisonment. He retired, a broken and ruined

man, to his country seat of Gorhambury, and spent the remaining five years of his life in scientific and philosophic pursuits; still, however, keeping up a show of his former magnificence, with an unconquerable pride which caused Prince Charles to exclaim, "This man scorns to go out in a snuff!"

For Bacon's personal character it is impossible to feel much admiration. He exhibited nearly all the unworthy traits of the Renaissance politician,—greed, ostentation, heartlessness, and lax public morality. But it is equally impossible not to admire his spacious and luminous mind, and the devotion to pure thought which constituted his deeper life. In a letter written at the outset of his career, he says proudly, "I confess that I have as vast contemplative ends as I have moderate civil ends; for I have taken all knowledge to be my province." In pursuance of this majestic programme he sketched out a work which was to have been called the *Instauratio Magna*. Of the six books only one, known as the *Novum Organum*, reached anything like definite shape; the *Advancement of Learning* (written also in Latin as *De Augmentis Scientiarum*) was intended as an introduction to the whole. The chief contribution made by Bacon to science was the application of the principle of inductive reasoning, whose superiority to the scholastic method of deduction he firmly established. The immense development of the natural sciences since his time has been made possible only by the acceptance of the inductive method of thought, by which the observation of specific facts leads up to the formulation of general laws. In the old scholastic system of deduction, general principles had been first laid down, and particular facts had been explained in the light of these principles. In the latter case, since theory rested on no actual experience, the explanations flowing therefrom had for the most part been fantastic and untrue. The change in method had to come with the rise of the scientific spirit;

His Intellectual "Programme"; the Inductive System.

it is Bacon's glory that he saw and expressed the vital need of change, before the scientific spirit had yet grown conscious of itself.

Bacon believed that Latin was the only medium to be depended upon for preserving thought; he therefore wrote in English only incidentally, and under protest. The *Essays*, by which he holds his chief place in English literature, were at first mere jottings down of desultory ideas, brief note-book memoranda. As such they were first published (then ten in number) in 1597, in the author's thirty-sixth year. Fifteen years later they were issued again, with additions; and in 1625, a year before Bacon's death, they were put forth in final form, the Essays now numbering fifty-eight, the old ones revised and expanded. It is clear that their charm grew upon Bacon, and urged him, half against his will, to put more and more serious effort into the manipulation of a language for which he had no great respect, yet of which he is one of the greatest masters.

The "Essays."

Even in their finished state the Essays are desultory and suggestive, rather than coherent or exhaustive. They deal with many subjects, of public and private conduct, of statecraft, of the nature and value of human passions and human relations; and with these graver themes are intermingled others of a lighter sort, on building, on the planting of gardens, on the proper mounting and acting of masques and other scenic displays. To a modern understanding those which deal with the deeper questions of human nature are apt to seem somewhat shallow and worldly wise. We get from them few large insights or generous points of view; everywhere we find wit, keen observation, grave or clever mundane judgments. Now and again, to be sure, Bacon startles us with an altogether unworldly sentence, such as this: "Little do men perceive what solitude is, and how far it extendeth; for a crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pict-

Their Subject-Matter.

ures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love." Some of the essays, such as that entitled *Of Great Place*, show an unworldly wisdom which, if applied to Bacon's own life, would have made it a very different thing. Not seldom, too, he lifts the curtain upon that inner passion of his existence, the thirst for intellectual truth, which made him noble in spite of the shortcomings of his character: "Truth," he says, "which only doth judge itself, . is the sovereign good of human nature."

Their Style.

Bacon shows himself in the Essays to be a consummate rhetorician. He made for himself a style which, though not quite flexible and modern, was unmatchable for pith and pregnancy in the conveyance of his special kind of thought. Though a devoted Latinist, and using a much Latinized vocabulary, he saw the structural differences of the two languages so clearly that, when the bulk of English prose was being written in loose sentences of enormous length, he struck out at once a thoroughly English type of sentence, short, crisp, and firmly knit. He rejected the conceitfulness and over-crowded imagery of the Euphuists, but knew how to light up his thought with well-placed figure, and to give to it an imaginative glow and charm upon occasion, contrasting strongly with the unfigurative style of Ben Jonson, who represents in his prose the extreme revulsion from Euphuism. For the student of expression, Bacon's essays are of endless interest and profit; the more one reads them the more remarkable seem their compactness and their nervous vitality. They shock a sluggish attention into wakefulness as if by an electric contact; and though they may sometimes fail to nourish, they can never fail to stimulate.

Bacon holds a commanding place in seventeenth century thought, but he can hardly be called typical of the century. He did not share its characteristic melancholy; his imagination is always subordinated to thought, whereas the characteristic mood of the century is one of dreamy or

mystical contemplation, in which imagination always takes the lead of abstract thinking; and finally he does not pass, as the typical seventeenth century writers so frequently do, from moods of earthly passion to moods of religious ecstasy. In all these respects the spirit of the time is better represented by a man whose youth fell, like Bacon's, in the high tide of the Elizabethan era, but who, from the first, stood apart, prophesying, both in his matter and his manner, of the age of James and Charles,—John Donne (1573–1631).

Donne spent a wild and irregular youth at Oxford and Cambridge, in the London Inns of Court, and in the south of Europe. Before the end of the sixteenth century he produced a body of lyric poetry of the utmost singularity. It is full of strange, interrupted music, and of vivid passion which breaks in jets and flashes through a veil of obscure thought and tortured imagery. In these moments of illumination, it becomes wonderfully poignant and direct, heart-searching in its simple human accents, with an originality and force for which we look in vain among the clear and fluent melodies of Elizabethan lyrists. Unfortunately these moments are comparatively rare. What is more immediately apparent in Donne's poetry, and what fascinated his disciples, is his use of "conceits," *i.e.*, far-fetched analogies and over-ingenious metaphors, which are so odd that we lose sight of the thing to be illustrated, in the startling nature of the illustration. With him, love is a spider, which, dropped into the wine of life, turns it to poison; night is an "ebon box," into which weary mortals are put as "disordered clocks" until the sun gives them "new works."* This "conceitful" form of writing was practised by Marini in Italy, and by Gongora in Spain, simultaneous-

Donne as a Poet.

His Use of Conceits.

* The second illustration is from one of Donne's followers, George Herbert, but it is entirely in the master's manner.

ly with Donne in England,* and during the first half of the seventeenth century it spread over Europe like an epidemic. It had a great and very baleful influence upon English poetry before the Restoration, affecting even Milton in his earlier work. Donne's lyrics were not published in his lifetime; but before their appearance in 1633, they had circulated for more than thirty years in manuscript, and their fascinating novelties and perversities had sunk into many minds which were to make the poetry of the next generation.

His Influence.

In middle life Donne entered the church, where he rose rapidly to be Dean of St. Paul's, and the most famous preacher of his time. He fell more and more under the shadow of a terrible spiritual gloom; and just as, in the poetry of his youth, he had seemed to feel the unrest and feverish intensity of a later generation, so in the sermons of his later years he seems to feel, before any of his contemporaries, the dark shadow of religious terror which was beginning to steal over Puritan England.

Donne as a Preacher.

The seventeenth century was pre-eminently an age of preaching. Theology was the first concern of all serious men, and it was round the pulpit that the storms which shook society chiefly raged. Of the large body of preachers who made the age illustrious in pulpit literature, Jeremy Taylor (1613–1667) was the most popular and gracious, as Donne was the most terrible and impressive. Taylor, like Donne, shares in the characteristic melancholy of the age; but in his case it is softened and tenderly poetized. His tones are sweet and warm, woven into a rich melody that hovers at times on the verge of the sentimental and the florid. His most famous work, the *Holy Living and Holy Dying* (1650–1651) was written in Wales, where he lived during the troubles of the Civil

Jeremy Taylor.

* Donne was formerly thought to have borrowed his manner from these foreign sources, but he is now believed to have developed it independently.

War. Hazlitt says of the *Holy Living and Holy Dying*, "It is a divine pastoral. He writes to the faithful followers of Christ as the shepherd pipes to his flock. . . He makes life a procession to the grave, but crowns it with garlands, and rains sacrificial roses on its path." *

Sir Thomas Browne.

In Sir Thomas Browne (1605–1682) the seventeenth century "time-spirit" found curious but very noble expression. His mind was deeply tinged with melancholy, and he shared the prevalent tendency toward religious mysticism. But these qualities are oddly infused with scepticism flowing from his scientific studies, a kind of dreamy, half-credulous scepticism, very different from Bacon's clear-cut rational view of things, but more characteristic of an age in which mediæval and modern ways of thought were still closely mingled together. After studying medicine at the famous schools of Montpellier in France and Padua in Italy, Browne settled as a physician at Norwich, in Norfolk, and there passed his life. In 1642 appeared his first work, *Religio Medici*, a confession of his own personal religious creed. It is in essence a mystical acceptance of Christianity. "Methinks," he says, "there be not impossibilities enough in religion for an active faith . . I love to lose myself in a mystery; to pursue my reason to an *O Altitudo!*" This sense of solemn exaltation, this losing of himself in a mystery and an *O Altitudo*, is Browne's most characteristic mood. He loves to stand before the face of the Eternal and the Infinite until the shows of life fade away, and he is filled with a passionate quietude and humility. We see in him how far the temper of men had departed from the Elizabethan zest of life, from the Renaissance delight in the stir and bustle of human activity. "Methinks," he says, "I begin to be weary of the sun. . . The world to me is

His Characteristic Mood.

* William Hazlitt, Lectures on the Literature of the Age of Elizabeth.

but a dream and mock-show, and we all therein but pantaloons and antics, to my severer contemplations."

While the mighty struggle which Lord Clarendon depicts in his *History of the Rebellion*, was shaking the earth with its "drums and tramplings," Sir Thomas Browne was quietly writing his longest work, *Vulgar Errors* (1646), an inquiry, half-scientific and half-credulous, into various popular beliefs and superstitions. Twelve years later he published the *Urn Burial*, a short piece suggested by the finding of some ancient Roman funeral urns buried in the earth in the neighborhood of Norwich. The *Urn Burial* is ostensibly an inquiry into the various historic methods of disposing of the dead, but by implication it is a descant upon the vanity of earthly ambition, especially in its attempt to hand on mortal memory to future ages. It is Browne's most characteristic work, and contains perhaps the supreme examples of his style.

The "Urn Burial."

The grandeur and solemnity of this style, at its best, is hardly to be paralleled in English prose. Like almost all the writers of his age, Browne is extremely desultory and uneven; his "purple patches" come unexpectedly, but these occasional passages have a pomp and majesty which even Milton has not surpassed. His English is full of magniloquent words and phrases coined from the Latin, and the music of his periods is deep, stately, and long-drawn, like that of an heroic funeral march or the full-stop of a cathedral organ. The opening of the last section of the *Urn Burial* will serve perhaps to make these comparisons clear: "Now, since these dead bones have already outlasted the living ones of Methusaleh, and in a yard under ground, and thin walls of clay, outworn all the strong and specious buildings above it; and quietly rested under the drums and tramplings of three conquests: what prince can promise such diuturnity unto his reliques?" The way in which his imagination plays through his thought and flashes a sudden

Browne's Style.

illumination of beauty over his pages, may be suggested by these words, written one night when he had sat late at his desk: "To keep our eyes open longer were but to act our Antipodes. The huntsmen are up in America!"

A wide-spread national mood usually finds its analyst. The melancholy of the seventeenth century, its causes, its manifestations, and its cure, were exhaustively treated by Richard Burton (1577–1641) in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*, a book into which he gathered the out-of-the-way learning and the dreamy speculation of fifty years of recluse life at Brasenose College, Oxford. So curious a mixture of pedantry, imagination, and quiet brooding humor, covering in a sense the whole life and thought of man, could hardly have been produced in any other era of English literature; as, indeed, no other era would have suggested "melancholy" as a theme for encyclopædic treatment.

Burton and the "Anatomy of Melancholy."

The character of an age is betrayed no more by the direct expression of its prevailing mood, than by the reactions which occur against that mood, and by the attempts which are made to escape from its domination. Such an attempt to escape from the intense seriousness of their age we may perhaps trace in the amatory verse of Carew, Lovelace, and Suckling, who, from their connection with Charles's court, are known as the Cavalier poets. Of the three, Carew (1598–1638?) was the sincerest poet. His work is occasionally tinged with licentiousness; but much of it, on the other hand, has genuine beauty and dignity. He felt the influence of both Ben Jonson and Donne, and such a poem as "To His Mistress in Absence" has the sanity and finish of the one, mingled with the magnetic eloquence of the other. He is best known by his lighter efforts such as his "Give me more love or more disdain," in which poem his felicity and courtly address display themselves at their height. He wrote also a striking court masque entitled *Cœlum Brit-*

The Cavalier Poets.

tanicum, which was produced in 1634 with the greatest magnificence, as a kind of counter-demonstration to a recent Puritan onslaught upon the theatre. Carew died in 1638, just before the bursting of the storm which was to scatter the gay society of Whitehall, and bring to poverty, exile, and death the men and women who had danced the measures in his joyous masque.

Richard Lovelace (1618–1658) and John Suckling (1609–1641) were young courtiers of wealth and great social brilliance, who practised poetry much as they practised swordsmanship; facility in turning a sonnet or a song being still, as in the Elizabethan age, considered a part of a courtier's education. Each of them wrote, it would seem almost by happy accident, two or three little songs which are the perfection of melody, grace, and aristocratic ease. Suckling's tone is cynical and mocking; the best songs of Lovelace, on the other hand, "To Lucasta on Going to the Wars," and "To Althea from Prison," breathe a spirit of old-fashioned chivalry, of faithfulness to the ideals of love and knightly honor. Both Suckling and Lovelace met with tragic reversal of fortune; and the contrast between their careless, brilliant youth, and their wretched death, has thrown about their names a romantic glamour which has had perhaps as much to do with preserving their fame as the tiny sheaf of lyrics they left behind.

Another form of escape from the melancholy and the superheated atmosphere of the age, is shown by the pastoral writers and celebrators of country life. Two of these, William Browne (1590–1645) and George Wither (1588–1667), were pastoral poets in the exact sense. They continued the pastoral tradition of the school of Spenser; and like Spenser they vitalized the conventions of pastoral verse by breathing into them a sincere feeling for nature, and by making them convey, under a playful disguise, a certain amount of

The Pastoral Poets.

ethical and religious thought. Browne's *Brittania's Pastorals* give us the homely sights and sounds of Devonshire, in a way which makes his pages charming in spite of their sentimentality, their false mythology, and their strained allegory. Wither's *Mistress of Philarete* is a celebration of Virtue, whom the poet personifies and praises exactly as if she were some lovely shepherdess of the plain. A kindred spirit to these simple-hearted pastoral poets is found in Isaac Walton (1593–1683). He was a London linen-draper, who spent his working days in measuring cloth and serving his customers over the shop counter; but who passed his holidays in quite another fashion, roaming with fishing-rod and basket along the banks of streams, and gazing with unspoiled eyes at the unspoiled peace and gayety of nature. His *Complete Angler* was printed in 1653, amid the fierce political and religious agitations of the Commonwealth; but a sweeter or more untroubled book has never been written. Two other members of this group of nature-poets and celebrants of country life remain to be mentioned, Robert Herrick and Andrew Marvell. The bulk of their work is, in the broader sense, pastoral; but they were both touched deeply at times by religious emotion, and Marvell reflects in his later poetry the strenuous political life in which he took part.

Walton: his Kinship with the Pastoral Poets, and Poets of Country Life.

Robert Herrick (1591–1674) was apprenticed in boyhood to his uncle, a goldsmith in Cheapside. After some time spent at Cambridge, he returned to London in his thirtieth year, and lived on his wits in the literary bohemia of the Inns of Court. In 1629, having taken orders, he was presented by King Charles to the vicarage of Dean Prior, in Devonshire. Here, with no duties to perform, save the reading of a weekly sermon to a handful of sleepy parishioners, he had ample opportunity, during the next nineteen years, to develop his peculiar

Herrick.

lyrical gift. His genius was of the kind which carves cherry-stones, not of the kind which hews great figures from the living rock. Left perfectly to himself, amid the flowers of his vicarage garden, with the pretty traditional ceremonies and merry-makings of country life to look at, he spent his days carving cherry-stones, indeed, but giving to them the delicate finish of cameos or of goldsmith's work. In poem after poem he enters with extraordinary zest and folk-feeling into the small joys and pageants of rural life, —a bridal procession, a cudgel-play between two clowns on the green, a puppet-show at the fair, the hanging of holly and box at Candlemas Eve. Perhaps the most exquisite of all is "Corinna going a-Maying." This little masterpiece is drenched with the pungent dews of a spring morning. As the poet calls his "sweet slug-a-bed" out of doors, and leads her through the village streets, already decked with white-thorn, toward the fields and woods where the May-day festivities are to be enacted, we feel that the poetry of old English life speaks through one who has experienced to the full its simple charm. Even the note of sadness at the end, the looking forward to that dark time when Corinna herself and all her village mates shall "lie drowned in endless night," has a peasant-like sincerity of feeling.

When the Parliamentary forces had gained the battle which they had been waging with the King's men, and Herrick as a loyalist was ejected from his living, he went back to London. The year of his return (1648) he published his poems under the title of *Hesperides and Noble Numbers*, the latter half of the title referring to the religious poems of the collection. There could be no more striking sign of the immense religious ferment of the time than these poems, emanating as they do from an epicurean and pagan nature, whose philosophy of life is summed up in his most famous song, "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may." In the wonderful

Herrick's Religious Poetry.

poem called "The Litany," the masterpiece among Herrick's religious poems, we see how upon even his gay and sensuous nature there descended at times that dark shadow of religious terror which later found its final and appalling expression in the *Grace Abounding* of John Bunyan. In Herrick's case, however, this is only a passing phase of feeling. He is to be remembered as the poet of "Corinna going a-Maying," the "Night-Piece to Julia," and of a myriad other little poems in which he chronicles his delight in nature, and in the exquisite surface of life as he saw it.

Marvell.

Andrew Marvell (1621–1678) was among the first of English poets to feel the charm of nature with romantic intensity, and at the same time with matter-of-fact realism. The bulk of his nature-poetry was written between his twenty-ninth and his thirty-first years, while he was living in country seclusion at Nunappleton, as tutor to the young daughter of Lord Fairfax, commander-in-chief of the Parliamentary forces. The principal record of these two years of poetic life is a long poem entitled "Appleton House;" besides this, the most beautiful of his country poems are perhaps "The Garden" and "The Mower to the Glow-worms." In these, and in his delicate little pastoral dialogues, he links himself with the pastoral school of Spenser; in other places, especially in the lines "To a Coy Mistress," he shows the influence of Donne. In his later life Marvell served for a time as assistant to Milton, then acting as Latin secretary to Cromwell's government. He helped Milton in his blindness, aided him to escape from his pursuers at the Restoration, and watched with mingled admiration and awe the progress of Paradise Lost, which began about 1658 to take shape, after twenty years' delay. In the noble "Ode to Cromwell," Marvell set an example, worthy of Milton himself, of simple dignity and classical restraint in the treatment of a political theme.

The religious excitement of the seventeenth century, which, as we have seen, found memorable expression in the prose of Donne, Taylor, and Browne, and which here and there affected the nature-poets, produced also a group of religious poets in the exclusive sense. Of these the first was Giles Fletcher (1588–1623), whose epic entitled *Christ's Victory and Triumph on Earth and in Heaven,* is, for all its quaintness of thought and phrase, no unworthy forerunner of Paradise Lost. It was published in 1610, when Milton was two years old. Signs of its influence upon Milton can be traced from his early Hymn on the Nativity to the Paradise Regained of his old age. The last canto, which deals with the Resurrection and with the entrance of Christ into Heaven, is the most beautiful part of the poem. It is a great Easter hymn, expressing the joy of earthly and heavenly things over the risen Redeemer. The sympathy with nature which it reveals is exquisite, resembling Chaucer's in its childlike delight and sweetness, but filled with a religious ecstasy which was not in Chaucer's nature. Giles Fletcher was a follower of Spenser, and the rich color and soft music of his epic constantly recall the verse of the *Faerie Queene.*

The Religious Poets; Giles Fletcher.

Three later religious poets, Herbert, Crashaw, and Vaughan, were followers of Donne; and they carried even farther than their master that use of "conceits," of strained metaphors and difficult comparisons, which caused Dr. Johnson to nickname Donne and his disciples the "Metaphysical School," though the "Fantastic School" would have been a more descriptive title. But as in the master, so in the group of religious poets who most completely felt his influence, perversities of manner are continually redeemed by imaginative intensity and deep feeling.

George Herbert (1593–1632), like Donne, published little or no poetry in his lifetime. After a youth spent in prep-

aration for a court career, and some years of disappointed waiting for court favors, he entered the Church. Once within the pale of the religious life, he felt the full force of that spiritual agitation and awe which sooner or later overtook all serious minds in the first half of the seventeenth century. After two years of devoted labor as a parish priest at Bemerton, near Salisbury, he was stricken with a mortal malady. On his deathbed he handed to Nicholas Ferrar a bundle of manuscript, asking him to read it, and then to use it or destroy it, as seemed to him fit. The volume was published the next year under the title of *The Temple*, in allusion to the scriptural verse, "In His temple doth every man speak in His honor." It is a curious picture of the conflict which Herbert went through, while subjecting his will and his worldly ambition to the service of God.

Herbert.

Herbert pushed even further than Donne the use of conceits. Many of his poems are mere bundles of these oddities of metaphor, quaint and crabbed to the last degree. But he manages, by means of them, to express many pregnant and far-reaching thoughts. At times he shows an unusual power of direct and familiar phrasing. By means of sudden turns, emphatic pauses, lightning-like "stabs" of thought, he forces home his words into the reader's memory, and makes his quaint and daring conceitfulness interpret, rather than obscure, his meaning.

The pervading atmosphere of Herbert's poetry is one of moral earnestness and sincere piety, rather intellectual than impassioned. He is, therefore, the true poet of the Church of England. Richard Crashaw (1613?–1650?), on the other hand, is the poet of Catholicism. His attitude toward divine things is not that of pious contemplation, but of ecstatic and mystical worship. His religious sense is southern rather than northern. The Reformation, as such, did not affect him.

Crashaw.

It served merely to kindle into intense flame his devotion to the older Church. This is the more curious because of the fact that Crashaw's youth and early nurture were of an ultra-protestant sort. At the college of Peterhouse in Cambridge, however, he read deeply in the works of the early church fathers and in the lives of the saints, and he took part in the fasts and vigils of a religious brotherhood gathered about Nicholas Ferrar at Little Gidding, just outside Cambridge. As the struggle between the Church of England and the Puritan dissenters grew more and more bitter, he fled for refuge to the arms of that venerable mother-church of which his nature had from the first made him a member. He was exiled by Cromwell's government; and after a time of bitter poverty in Paris, he was befriended by a brother poet, Abraham Cowley, and introduced to Queen Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I., who had taken refuge at the court of France from the storms of civil war in England. Through her influence with a Roman Cardinal, Crashaw was given a place in the Monastery of Our Lady of Loretto, in Italy; and he died shortly after, from the effect of a pilgrimage which he made on foot in the burning heat of the Italian summer,—a fit end for a poet in whom lived again the mystical religious fervor of the Middle Ages.

Crashaw's poetry is excessively uneven. It contains the most extravagant examples of frigid conceitfulness to be found among all the followers of Donne; yet side by side with these, often in the same poem, occur passages of noble distinction. His two most characteristic poems are perhaps "The Flaming Heart" and the "Hymn to Saint Theresa." He sings the raptures of the soul visited by divine love, in terms as concrete and glowing as any human lover has ever used to celebrate an earthly passion. An ethereal music, and a kind of luminous haze, both reminding us of Shelley's work, are the distinguishing features of his poetry at its best. At the close of his

poem entitled "Description of a Religious House," we find the lines:

The self-remembering soul sweetly recovers
Her kindred with the stars, and meditates her immortal way
Home to the original source of light and intellectual day.

This is the key to Crashaw's imaginative world. He is like a moth fluttering in the radiance which streams from the "source of light and intellectual day."

Vaughan.

Henry Vaughan (1621–1695), the third poet of this group, spent his youth among the romantic glens of the valley of the Usk, in northern Wales. Here was the legendary seat of King Arthur's court; and here, tradition says, Shakespeare heard from the lips of the country-folk the name and doings of Puck, before writing *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* Vaughan went up to Oxford in 1638, just as the quarrel between the King and the Parliament was drawing to a head. He fought for the King's cause, and when that cause was lost, retired to his native valley in Wales, to spend the rest of his long life as an obscure country doctor. The death of his wife and his own severe illness awakened his religious nature, and under the influence of Herbert's *Temple* he wrote and published (1650) the first part of *Silex Scintillans,* or Sparks from a Flint-stone, that is, sparks struck by divine grace from a hard and sinful heart.

Vaughan's poetry, like Crashaw's, is very uneven. The reader must search long before finding the things of value, but when found they are worth the search. His best poems, such as "The World," "Departed Friends," and "The Hidden Flower," show an extraordinary insight into the mystical life of Nature and of the heart, and a strange nearness to the unseen world. No English poet has touched the deeper mysteries with more child-like simplicity and unconsciousness, nor with a more delicate and elusive music.

Another poet must be mentioned here, because of his connection with the "metaphysical school." Cowley was famous as a poet at fifteen, at thirty his name was one to conjure with, and in his later years he was accepted by his contemporaries as the crown and acme of the poets of all time. His reputation decayed rapidly after his death, and he is now a somewhat "frustrate ghost" in the corridors of fame. He has all the vicious mannerisms of the school of Donne, with little thought or passion to redeem them. His greatest effort, *The Mistress*, a series of love poems, might, in Dr. Johnson's energetic words, "have been written for hire by a philosophical rhymer who had only heard of another sex;" and his once-famous *Davideis*, an heroic poem of the troubles of King David of Israel, is now hopelessly dead. From any sweeping condemnation of Cowley, however, must be excepted his earnest and simple lines "On the Death of Mr. William Hervey," his beautiful Elegy on Crashaw, and a few of his Pindarique Odes, which last have at times a full and sonorous music. The loose ode form, adapted by Cowley from the Greek of Pindar, was used all the way down through the age of Dryden and Pope, and was almost the only relief which the classic age allowed itself from the monotonous beat of the heroic couplet. Cowley, as secretary to Queen Henrietta Maria in her exile, was associated with the men who carried to victory the banner of classicism and prepared the way for Dryden. In his own work he hung dubiously between the romantic and the classic schools; the romantic impulse in him was weak, and the classical instinct not spontaneous. Cowley, it must be said, took his fame modestly; and in the preface to the *Davideis* he hopes that he has opened a way for other poets worthier than himself, in the field of the biblical epic. He had not opened the way, but the way was found: eleven years later Milton published *Paradise Lost*.

Cowley.

John Milton, after Shakespeare the greatest of English poets, was born December 9, 1608, in Bread Street, London. His father was a scrivener (notary public), who had embraced the Puritan faith, but whose Puritanism was not of the hard and forbidding type. The boy grew up in a home where music, literature, and the social graces gave warmth and color to an atmosphere of serene piety. During his boyhood, England was still Elizabethan; among the great body of Puritans, geniality and zest of life had not yet given place to that harsh strenuousness which Puritanism afterward took on. Milton was taught music, and was allowed to range at will through the English poets; among these Spenser, the poet of pure beauty, exercised over him a charm which was to leave its traces upon all the work of his early manhood. At Christ's College, Cambridge, whither he proceeded in his sixteenth year, he began to prepare himself with earnestness and consecration, for the life of poetry. He had already determined to be a poet, and that too in no ordinary sense. His mind was fixed on lofty themes, and he believed that such themes could be fitly treated only by one who had led a lofty and austere life. The magnificent ode, "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," which deals with the signs and portents filling the world at the Saviour's birth, was written at twenty-one. It showed clearly, or might have shown to anyone who had eyes to see, that another mighty poet had been given to England.

Milton's Early Life.

Two years later Milton left Cambridge and went to Horton, a little village west of London, whither his father had retired to spend his declining days. Here, in a beautiful country of woods, meadows, and brimming streams, the young poet spent five quiet years. To the outward view he was all but idle, merely "turning over the Greek and Latin classics" in a long holiday. Really he was hard at work, preparing himself by meditation, by communion with nature and with the lofty spirits

At Horton.

of the past, for some achievement in poetry which (to use his own words) England "would not willingly let die." Meanwhile he was writing very little, but that little perfect, thrice distilled. A sonnet sent to his friend on his twenty-third birthday shows that he was deeply dissatisfied with what he had done in verse before going to Horton; and indeed, if we except the Nativity Hymn, he had reason to be dissatisfied. The other poems * of his college period are disfigured by the vices of conceitfulness, exaggeration, and tasteless ingenuity, peculiar to the seventeenth century. The Hymn itself is marred by the same faults, and even its beauties are some of them plainly imitative. But at Horton Milton's taste gradually became surer, his touch upon the keys of his instrument superlatively firm and delicate. He went back to purer models, and learned how to borrow without imitating. The result was three long poems and several short ones, absolutely flawless in workmanship, full of romantic beauty curbed and chastened by a classical sense of proportion and fitness. It is in these poems that we first see clearly what Milton stands for in the poetic art of the century. He is a child of the Renaissance, the last of that great romantic line of which Spenser, Sidney, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Donne, and Fletcher are scions; but he has drunk deeper than the others of the springs of antique art; there is in him a more austere artistic instinct, linked somehow with his austerer moral nature. The spirit of his art is romantic; its expression is, in the widest sense, classic.

"L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso."

The first product of Milton's Horton period, the poem in two parts, "L'Allegro" (the joyous man) and "Il Penseroso" (the meditative man), is in its nature autobiographical. The two parts of the poem paint the two sides of Milton's own temperament: the one urging outward, toward communion with the brightness

* No notice is here taken of Milton's Latin verse, the bulk of which dates from his college period.

and vivid activity of life; the other drawing inward, toward lonely contemplation, or musings upon the dreamier, quieter aspects of nature and of human existence. To represent these two moods he imagines two typical youths, living each through a day of typical thoughts and pursuits, in the midst of surroundings harmonious with his special tastes. Taken together the two little poems give a view of the life which Milton led during the five happy years of his preparation for the poetic ministry, wonderfully compressed, clarified, and fixed in permanent symbols.

The next two poems of this period were in masque form; one a fragment, *Arcades*, the other a complete masque, taking its title from the chief character, "Comus," god of revelry. *Comus* was written at the request of Milton's friend Henry Lawes, a musician, who supplied the music, and played the part of the Attendant Spirit when the masque was presented (1634) in the castle of Ludlow, on the Welsh border. The "plot" of *Comus* is simple and very effective, affording just a touch of the fantastic mythological element needed for scenic display, yet leaving the main interest of the piece to centre upon the rich, serious poetry which Milton puts into the mouths of his few characters. Two brothers and a sister, astray by night in the forest, become separated; the girl is taken captive by Comus, and is led to the place where he dwells surrounded by strange half-bestial creatures whom he has transformed. He attempts to work upon her the same transformation. She resists him, refusing to yield to the allurements of sense, and is at length rescued by her brothers and an "attendant spirit," who takes the guise of their father's shepherd. It was characteristic of Milton that he should have put a serious moral lesson into a form of spectacular and lyric entertainment usually of the most frivolous kind. Fortunately, his power as an artist was so developed that he could charge the delicate texture of his masque with ethical doctrine, without at all marring its airy beauty.

"Comus."

When *Comus* was written, the Puritans and the court party were already drifting toward open conflict. The influences of the Renaissance, for which the court party largely stood, were losing force; and the moral enthusiasms flowing from the Reformation were meanwhile growing narrower and intenser, in that other element of the nation, the Puritan party, where they had taken deepest hold. An atmosphere of moral strenuousness, soon to deepen into sternness, and then into hard fanaticism, had begun to spread over England, affecting in one way or another the vital spirits of all men. In *Comus* this moral strenuousness finds expression, though in the most unobtrusive manner. In the last poem of Milton's Horton period, "Lycidas," written in 1637, there is sounded a sterner note, a note of austere indignation and fierce warning against the corruptions which have crept into the Church.

Deepening Seriousness of Milton's Work.

"Lycidas" is an elegy upon the death of Edward King, a college-mate of Milton's, drowned in the Irish Sea. King had been, in his way, a poet; and it was a fixed convention, among the poets of the pastoral school, to represent themselves and their art under the guise of the shepherd life. When Milton, therefore, represents himself and his dead friend as shepherds driving their flocks, and piping for fawns and satyrs to dance; when he calls the sea-nymphs and the gods of the wind to task for the disaster of his fellow-shepherd's death,—he merely makes use of a form of thought bequeathed to him through Spenser, Fletcher, and Browne, from a long succession of earlier poets. But he does not rest content with this; he adds to it another kind of symbolism, not pagan but Christian. King, besides being a poet, had been a preacher, or at least had been in preparation for the ministry. He was therefore not only a shepherd under Apollo, but a shepherd under Christ; a keeper of the souls of men which are the flocks of the Good Shepherd. This second symbolism Milton

"Lycidas."

boldly identifies with the first, for to him the poet and the preacher were one in spiritual aim. Still more boldly, in the strange procession of classic and pseudo-classic divinities whom he summons to mourn over Lycidas, he includes Saint Peter, the bearer of the keys of the Church; and he puts in his mouth words of solemn wrath against those "blind mouths," those worldly churchmen who,

> for their belly's sake
> Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold;

closing with a shadowy menace of the punishment which is soon to overtake the ecclesiastical corruption of the age. *Lycidas* gathers up all the iridescent color and varied music of Milton's youthful verse, indeed, of the whole Spenserian school; and at the same time, by virtue of the moral passion which burns in it, it looks forward to the period of public combat into which the poet was about to plunge.

The twenty years of Milton's life as a public disputant we must pass over hurriedly. They were preceded by a period of travel abroad (1638–1639), chiefly in Italy, during which he met Galileo, was entertained by the Italian literary academies, and pondered much upon a projected epic poem on the subject of King Arthur's wars, a subject suggested to him by the epics of Tasso and Ariosto. His return was hastened by news of King Charles's expedition against the Scots, a step whose seriousness Milton well knew. Once back in London, he was drawn into a pamphlet war on the vexed question of Episcopacy. Then followed his ill-starred marriage, and the writing of his pamphlets on divorce; these were received with astonishment and execration by his countrymen, who did not see that

Milton's Public Life: His Prose Writings.

Milton was only bringing to bear, upon one issue of domestic life, that free spirit of question everywhere being applied to public institutions, and everywhere spreading change through the social fabric of England. Another signal illustration of Milton's revo-

lutionary questioning followed, in the shape of an attack upon the censorship of the press. The time-honored institution of the censorship he saw to be an intolerable hinderance to freedom of thought; and in a pamphlet entitled *Areopagitica* he launched against it all the thunders and lightnings of his magnificent rhetoric. On the execution of the King (1649) Milton was the first to lift up his voice, amid the hush and awe of consternation, in defence of the deed. His pamphlet *On the Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* was of such timely service to the Commonwealth party that he was offered the position of Latin secretary to Cromwell's government, his duties being to indite correspondence with foreign powers, and to reply to attacks by foreign pamphleteers of importance. In the midst of a controversy of this sort his eyes failed, and in a short time he was totally blind. He continued his duties, with Andrew Marvell as his assistant, until he was dismissed in 1658 by General Monk, who was already plotting to restore Charles's son to the throne, as King Charles II. On the king's return in 1660, Milton was forced to go into hiding, and he barely escaped paying with his life for his fearless support of the ideals and actions of the Commonwealth party.

Ever since his college days Milton had been looking forward to undertaking some work of poetry large enough to give scope to all his power. By 1642 he had virtually decided upon the subject of the fall of Adam, though he at first intended to treat the subject in the form of a drama. During the sixteen years between 1642 and his dismissal from the Latin secretaryship in 1658, this subject was seldom long absent from his mind. In the midst of the "noises and hoarse disputes" into which he had thrown himself for patriotic service, the only poetic production which he allowed himself was a small group of sonnets, written at rare intervals and dealing for the most part with passing events. Except for these, he had hidden "that one talent which is death to hide," but he more

than once turned aside in his pamphlets, to throw out a proud hint concerning the work laid upon him by the "great Taskmaster," of adding something majestic and memorable to the treasury of English verse. Meanwhile his chosen subject lay in his mind, gradually taking form, and gathering to itself the riches of long study and reflection. When at last his duty as a patriot was done, he turned at once to his deferred task. Forced to seek shelter from the storm of the royalist reaction, he carried with him into his hiding place the opening book of *Paradise Lost*, begun two years earlier. The poem was finished by 1665, and was published by an obscure printer in 1667.

"Paradise Lost."

The central theme of *Paradise Lost*, namely, the fall of Adam from a state of innocence into a state of sin, occupies a relatively small space in the whole scheme of the poem. The action begins * in heaven, before man is created, or the earth and its ministering spheres are hung out in space. The rebellion of Lucifer against the omnipotent ruler of Heaven, the defeat of the rebel armies and their casting down into the dreary cavern of Hell, which has been carved out of Chaos to be their prison-house; the creation of the terrestrial universe and the setting of man in the garden of Eden to take the place of the apostate angels in God's affection; the expedition of Lucifer from Hell to Earth for the purpose of beguiling the innocent pair; the going and coming of God's messengers and sentinels,—all this constitutes a vast drama of which the actual temptation and fall of Adam is only an episode. With the exception of Dante no modern mind has conceived an action so immense, or set a world-drama on a stage of such sublime dimensions.

The Vastness of its Scheme.

* In the approved epic manner, Milton opens his poem in the middle of the action, after the rebellious angels have been cast down into Hell. The earlier events are given in retrospective narrative by the archangel Raphael and by Adam.

In spite of this vastness of scheme, however, Milton's imagination does not take refuge in vagueness. His imagery is everywhere concrete, in places startlingly vivid and tangible. It may even be urged against the poem that some things are presented with an exactness of delineation which detracts from their power to awe the mind; but broadly speaking, the poet's ability to evoke clear and rememberable pictures, of more than titanic size, and to make his cosmic drama as clear to our mental vision as are the natural sights of earth, gives to his work its most enduring claim upon our interest. Upon the theology of the poem time has laid its finger; a part of it thoughtful men now reject, or interpret in a far different sense from Milton's. The blind Puritan bard hardly succeeded, even to the satisfaction of his own day, in his avowed intention to

The Concreteness of its Imagery.

> assert Eternal providence
> And justify the ways of God to men,

for his religion was a special creed, made up in part of perishable dogmas. But by the imperishable sublimity of the pictures which he has given to our imaginations, he has asserted Providence in another sense, and justified God in the glory of the human mind He created.

The word "sublimity," so often abused, has in the case of Milton's later work, real fitness. It was a quality to which he attained only after years of stern experience; it was the reward of his long renunciation of his art in the interest of his country. There are suggestions of it in his youthful hymn on the Nativity, and one passage of Lycidas attains it:

Milton's "Sublimity."

> Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
> Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;
> Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
> Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
> Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;

> Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
> Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
> Where the great Vision of the guarded mount
> Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.

These lines, taken in their proper connection, achieve that synthesis of the majestic and the mysterious which we call sublimity. They show that the quality was native to Milton's mind. But it is highly probable that without those years of stern repression, when his imagination was held back by his will, gaining momentum like the dammed-up waters of a stream, he would never have attained that peculiar mightiness of imagery and phrase which causes *Paradise Lost* to deserve, as does perhaps no other work of literature, the epithet sublime. Of course, this sublimity Milton gained only at the expense of some qualities of his youthful work which we would fain have had him keep. Grace, lightness, airy charm,—these had gone from him forever when he took up his art again after his long silence. The art of "L'Allegro" and "Comus," responsive and sinuous as the tracery of dancing figures about a Greek vase, had given place to an art as massive and strenuous as the frescoes of Michael Angelo, depicting the solemn scenes of the creation and destruction of the world.

The change in the quality of thought and imagery is, of course, accompanied by a change in style. Blank verse

The Verse of "Paradise Lost."

Milton deliberately chose as the most severe of English measures; having chosen it, he proceeded to build out of it a type of verse before unknown, admirably suited to the grandeur of his subject. The chief peculiarity of this Miltonic verse is the length and involution of period. The sense is held suspended through many lines, while clause after clause comes in to enrich the meaning or to magnify the descriptive effect; then the period closes, and this suspended weight of meaning falls upon the mind like the combing mass of a breaker on the shore. A second and scarcely less important charac-

teristic (though hardly so novel), is the extreme variety of pause; the sense comes to an end, and the suspended thought falls, at constantly varying places in the line, a device by which blank verse, monotonous when otherwise treated, becomes the most diversified of rhythms. In these and other ways Milton made for himself a sublime verse-instrument to match his sublime imagery and theme. The music of the Horton poems, compared with that of *Paradise Lost*, is like the melody of the singing voice beside the manifold harmonies of an orchestra, or the rolling chant of a cathedral organ.

In 1672, four years after the publication of *Paradise Lost*, appeared Milton's third volume of verse. (The college and Horton poems had been published in 1645.) It consisted of *Paradise Regained*, a supplement to *Paradise Lost*; and of *Samson Agonistes*, a drama in the Greek manner, on an Old Testament subject which Milton had thought of treating nearly thirty years before. "Paradise Regained." *Paradise Regained* deals with Christ's temptation by Satan in the Wilderness. In his first epic Milton had shown how mankind, in the person of Adam, falls before the wiles of the Tempter, and becomes an outcast from divine grace; in his second he shows how mankind, in the person of Jesus, wins readmission to divine grace by withstanding the hellish adversary. By general consent *Paradise Regained* is given a much lower place than *Paradise Lost*, in spite of passages that rise to an impressive height. The poet's weariness is manifest; his epic vein seems exhausted. *Samson Agonistes*, however, a venture in a new field of poetry, shows Milton's "Samson Agonistes." genius at its subtlest and maturest. His desire was to bring over into English the gravity and calm dignity of the Greek tragedies; and, avoiding the lifeless effect of previous experiments of the sort, to give to his grave and calm treatment the passion, the conviction, the kindling breath without which poetry cannot exist. Two circumstances made this

not only easy, but almost inevitable for him. In the first place his character, lofty and ardent to begin with, had now under misfortune and sacrifice taken on just that serene and melancholy gravity peculiar to the great tragic poets of antiquity. In the second place, the story of Samson was, in a sense, his own story. Like Samson he had fought against the Philistines with the strength of thirty men; he had taken a wife from among his enemies and suffered bitter loss at her hands; he sat now, blind and dishonored, amid the triumph of the Cavaliers, as Samson among the holiday-making Philistines. As he wrote, his own personal bitterness found veiled expression; and the grand choruses, with their dark and smothered music, pulsate with personal feeling.

Milton's Last Years.

Milton lived for three years after the publication of his last poems. Much of his patrimony had disappeared in the readjustments of the Restoration, and in the great London fire of 1666; but he was still able to live in modest comfort. The painter Richardson gives us a glimpse of the poet during his last years, as he was led about the streets clad in a gray camblet coat, or as he sat in a gray coarse cloth coat at the door of his house, near Bunhill Fields, to receive visitors. "Lately," continues Richardson, "I had the good fortune to have another picture of him from an aged clergyman in Dorsetshire. In a small house . . up one pair of stairs, which was hung with rusty green, he found John Milton, sitting in an elbow chair; black clothes, and neat enough; pale but not cadaverous, his hands and fingers gouty and with chalkstones." When we compare the figure thus suggested with the portrait painted in his twenty-first year, we realize how far and under what public and private stress, Milton had travelled from the world of his youth. In making himself over from Elizabethan to Cromwellian he had suffered much and renounced much; he had lost many of those genial human qualities which have won for less

worthy natures a warmth of love denied to his austerity. But if we deny him love, we cannot help feeling an admiration mixed with awe, for the loftiness and singleness of aim, the purity and depth of moral passion, which make him conspicuous even among the men of those moving times.

The moral grandeur of Milton's character, and the imaginative grandeur of his art, become more striking when we see them projected against the background of the age into which he survived, and in which he did his later work. This was the age of the Restoration comedy, a literary product hardly to be equalled anywhere in the history of the mind for heartless and shallow cynicism; of the Restoration rhymed tragedies, monuments of fustian and rant; of the political and occasional verse of Dryden, uncompromisingly clever and worldly-wise: it was an age immersed in mundane pleasures, sceptical, critical, in love with "common-sense" and intolerant of ideals.

The deep voice of Milton rolled on its interrupted song more than a decade after the chorus of romantic poetry had been hushed, and men had turned away to listen to the new "classical" message of Dryden and the poets of precision. In like manner the fervid and imaginative prose of the first half of the century survives into the Restoration period, in the work of John Bunyan, a late but very striking exponent of the religious revival which had begun more than a century before to stir the conscience of Northern Europe. Bunyan, the rude tinker of Elstow, who produced, without learning or literary example, one of the unique masterpieces of imaginative English prose, can only be understood by reference to another and greater literary phenomenon of the seventeenth century, the Authorized Version of the Bible. This version was made by order of James I.; the work was divided among numerous churchmen of his appointment, and was finished in 1611. The translators used not

Bunyan.

The King James Bible.

only the original Hebrew and Greek texts, and the Latin Vulgate, but also the various English translations from Wyclif down. They succeeded in blending together the peculiar excellencies of all these, with the result that we possess in the King James Bible a monument of English prose holding of no particular age, but gathering up into itself the strength and sweetness of all ages.

The influence of this mighty book upon the literature of the seventeenth century, although great, was restricted by two circumstances. In the first place, the Bible was early monopolized by the Puritan party; and biblical phraseology and imagery became associated with an ideal of life which, at least in the grim and ascetic form it assumed under James and Charles, was distasteful to most of the makers of literature. In the second place, Latin was still held in superstitious reverence among cultivated men; and writers went to that language for instruction, neglecting the ruder but more vital excellencies abounding in the prose of the Bible.

Its Influence upon the Literature of the Century.

Bunyan, however, was at once a Puritan of the Puritans, an instinctive artist, and an unlearned man, to whom Latin was only a name. Hence the grandeur, simplicity, and force of biblical prose, acting without any interference upon his passionately earnest imagination, made him, all unknown to himself, a great writer.

Upon Bunyan.

John Bunyan (1628–1688) was born in the village of Elstow, Bedfordshire. His father was a tinker, a trade then considered little above vagabondage. After a slight schooling, and a short experience of soldiering in the Civil War (on which side is unknown), he married a wife as poor as himself, and took up his father's trade of pot- and kettle-mender. Before this, however, there had begun in him a spiritual struggle so terrible and so vivid, as we see it in the pages of his *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (published 1666), that by

His Religious Struggles: "Grace Abounding."

contrast the events of his outer life are pallid and unreal. As he wrestled and played at tip-cat with his village mates on the green, or stood in the tower of the church to watch the bell-ringing, he was haunted by thoughts of sudden death, of the Judgment Day, and of his soul's damnation. He saw an awful Face looking down from the clouds, and heard a voice asking whether he would leave his sins and go to Heaven, or have his sins and go to Hell. The tiles upon the house-roofs, the puddles in the road, spoke to him with voices of temptation and mockery. From this religious insanity he was rescued by a Mr. Gifford, a local preacher, who gave him comfort and courage. Soon Bunyan himself began to preach; and a revulsion of feeling now lifted him to heights of ecstatic joy in the mercifulness of God and the beauty of holiness. He saw Christ himself looking down at him through the tiles of the house-roof, saying "My grace is sufficient for thee"; and the sense of salvation came like a "sudden noise of wind rushing in at the window, but very pleasant." In all this we see in its most intense form the religious excitement of the seventeenth century, and also the qualities of imagination and feeling which make Bunyan so powerful a writer.

Later Life: "Pilgrim's Progress."

At the Restoration, persecution of the nonconformist sects began. Bunyan was arrested for holding illegal religious meetings; and he spent the next twelve years in confinement, earning bread for his family by putting tags to shoe-laces, and keeping his mind awake by writing what he was no longer at liberty to speak. In the midst of a sober controversial work, he happened to employ the trite metaphor of a journey, to typify the Christian life. At once the figure began to grow and blossom; a throng of pictures and dramatic incidents started up before his mind. Almost before he knew it the metaphor had grown into a book, and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, one of the three great allegories of the world's litera-

ture,* was written. Bunyan seems to have been himself astonished at the ease with which the story grew, and a little frightened at the pleasure it gave him to present his solemn theme under the guise of a nursery tale. He kept the book locked in his desk, and did not publish it until 1678, six years after his release from prison.

It furnished the simple Bedfordshire cottagers for whom it was written, with a reflection of their own inmost struggles and aspirations, in a form which combined the fascinations of the novel, the fairy-tale, and the romance of adventure. The novel, the great literary discovery of the next century, appears here in its germ. Not only is the physical world through which Christian journeys from the "Wicket-gate" to the Land of Beulah, pictured with the most familiar realism; but the wayfarers whom he meets are such as might have been seen in Bunyan's day on any English market road,—portly Mr. Worldly-Wiseman, full of prudential saws; blundering, self-confident young Ignorance; "gentlemanlike" Demas; and sweet talkative Piety. The landscape, the houses, the people, are all given with quaint sturdy strokes which stamp them upon the memory forever; so that it is almost impossible for a reader of *Pilgrim's Progress* to think of the journey otherwise than as a real personal experience. And added to the charm which the book has as realism, is its charm as romance. If, in one sense, it may be said to have ushered in the eighteenth century novel, in another it may be said to have revived the mediæval romance, in which the hero was made to contend against dangers natural and supernatural, on the way to the goal of his desires. Giant Despair in his grim castle, the obscene devils creeping and muttering in the Valley of the Shadow, the dreadful enemy Apollyon, the angels and archangels who lead the way, with harpings and hosannas, from the

Its Subject Matter.

*The others alluded to are Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

dread River of Death to the shining gates of the Celestial City, give to the story an element of marvel and adventure which immensely increases its appeal. If we add to this the charm of its style, so quaintly graphic, so humorously direct, so tender and rich and lyrical when the author is moved by the beauty of his vision, it seems no matter for surprise that *Pilgrim's Progress*, before Bunyan's death, was read with delight not only throughout England, but in France, in Holland, and in the far-off colonies of America.

Its Style.

As *Paradise Lost* is the epic of Puritanism in its external and theological aspect, the *Pilgrim's Progress* is the epic of Puritanism in its inner and emotional phases. They are together the two great final products of that intellectual and artistic revival which we call the Renaissance, and of that religious revival which we call the Reformation. They mark the end of the stream of literature which flows down into the second half of the seventeenth century from its source in the later reign of Henry VIII. and in the early Elizabethan age. We must now turn to consider a stream of literature of a very different kind, which began in a revolt against the extravagance and formlessness of the reigning "romantic" style, and which at the Restoration assumed an authority which it maintained uninterruptedly for nearly a hundred years.

End of the Romantic Literature of the Century.

CHAPTER IX

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: THE RESTORATION

THE date 1660 is one of the most significant in the history of English literature, as it is in the history of English politics. In that year Charles II. was brought to the throne from which his father had been driven. The extravagant joy with which the king was received on his return from exile, showed how closely this change of government from commonwealth to kingship corresponded to a change in the mood of the nation. The passionate absorption in other-worldliness, which was the essence of Puritanism, had, as we have seen, checked the frank delight in this world, and interest in the problem of living successfully there, which were of the Renaissance. But the Puritan ideal, by its very nature, could appeal directly to comparatively few. Indirectly, indeed, by force of example, it influenced many; but the multitude at length grew weary of playing a part so exhausting and so difficult. During the latter years of the Commonwealth signs of a relaxed temper on the part of the public were not lacking; for example, licenses were given for operas to be performed in London. When at length the leaders of the Commonwealth forsook their own ideal and confessed its failure, the mass of the nation turned with relief to the pleasures and interests of the present world, ready to regard with complacency even the excesses that characterized the court of Charles II.

The Restoration.

The Restoration period must not be thought of, however, as a continuation of the interrupted Renaissance. Between them there is an important difference. In the age of Eliz-

abeth, as in the age of Charles II. and his successors, the leading motive was indeed the exhibition of physical and mental power on the stage of this life, but the Elizabethan thought of this life not as limited and contracted by circumstances and conditions, but as having unmeasured possibilities. Not only the geographical world, but the intellectual world also, was being enlarged and thrown open. The bounds of human thought, as well as those of human activity, seemed infinitely remote; the imagination dealing with power, as in Marlowe, or with knowledge, as in Bacon, took wings to itself and flew. But in the temperament of the Restoration period there was dependence on the resources of actual life, without faith in the extension of those resources. There was the disposition to accept the present in its narrow sense, to exploit life on the narrow grounds that circumstances afforded.

Difference between the Period of the Restoration and that of the Renaissance.

This sense of present fact, of realism, as distinguished from the transcendentalism of Renaissance and Puritan thought, is the chief characteristic of the mood of the century which succeeded the Restoration. In science it showed itself as an absorption in the details of investigation, as opposed to the generalizations of Bacon. In politics it showed itself in the interest in actual conditions, as opposed to dreams of theocracy. In all directions it appeared as a disposition toward conservatism and moderation. Men had learned to fear individual enthusiasm, and therefore they tried to discourage it by setting up ideals of conduct in accordance with reason and common sense, to which all men should adapt themselves. They tried to look alike, to behave alike, to write alike. Rules of etiquette and social conventions were established, and the problem of life became that of self-expression within the narrow bounds which were thus prescribed.

Characteristics of the Restoration Period.

The literature of the period reflects these tendencies. On its serious side it is largely concerned with politics, that is, with the effort of men to organize the state, and to give it power sufficient to restrain individual ambition. The lighter literature reflects the interest of men in learning to live with one another. Naturally, it is much concerned with life in town, and with details of dress and manners which are important there. But the most noteworthy evidence of the temper of the time in literature is the tacit agreement of writers, both in prose and poetry, upon rules and principles in accordance with which they should write. The acceptance of these literary conventions drawn from the practice of writers of the past, marks the difference between the *classic* age of Dryden and Pope, and the *romantic*, individualistic epoch of Spenser and Shakespeare.

Restoration Literature.

In this difference the influence of France counted for much. There the reaction against the poetic license of the Renaissance had set in somewhat earlier. Its foremost representative, Malherbe, lived at the time when Henry IV. and Richelieu were laying foundations for the reconstruction of the French monarchy; and he represents a sort of corresponding establishment of order and discipline in literature. Malherbe regulated versification, condemned license in rhyme, and waged war against all harshness and obscurity of expression. In short, he anticipated the work of Dryden and Pope in England. The influence of Malherbe was supplemented by that of Corneille and Racine, who developed a drama on the lines of Latin tragedy, succeeding where the English classicists of the sixteenth century had signally failed. At the same time Molière developed realistic comedy, in prose and verse. It must be remembered that many Englishmen of the class which cared for literature and the stage, spent years of exile in France, and naturally came to accept the principles of French taste.

The Influence of France.

Through the new artistic conceptions brought back to England by the exiles, French influence upon English literature, especially upon the English drama, was strengthened. To their notions of refinement the license of the older dramatists seemed uncouth. "I have seen Hamlet," wrote Evelyn, "but now these old plays begin to disgust this refined century, since their majesties have been so long abroad." Altogether, though English literature of the Restoration is a genuine native growth, in accordance with tendencies which can be discerned in the early seventeenth century, particularly in the work of Ben Jonson, yet the example of France, like that of Italy at an earlier period, was important in giving definiteness to movements which otherwise might have been tentative and hesitating.

The most striking way in which English poetry reflected the spirit of the new era, was in its substitution of a single measurably perfect form for the varied lawlessness of the age which had gone before. This form, called the heroic couplet, consisted of two pentameter lines connected by rhyme. It had been used in earlier periods, for example by Chaucer; but in his hands the couplet had not been necessarily a unit, the thought having often been drawn out into the succeeding pair of verses, with no pause at the rhyming word. And in the period of romanticism which followed the eighteenth century, the couplet was once more used with the old freedom. The literary ideals of the Restoration, as contrasted with those of the romantic school, may be illustrated by the comparison of a few lines from Keats, such as these from the beginning of *Endymion*,

The Heroic Couplet.

> **A thing of beauty is a joy forever :**
> **Its loveliness increases ; it will never**
> **Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep**
> **A bower quiet for us, and a sleep**
> **Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing ;**

with these from *The Hind and the Panther* of Dryden:

> A milk-white hind, immortal and unchanged,
> Fed on the lawns, and in the forest rang'd;
> Without unspotted, innocent within,
> She fear'd no danger for she knew no sin.

In the first, it is clear, the couplet exerts little control over the thought; in the second the thought is limited and regulated by the acceptance of a precise and narrow form; and this limitation and regulation were of the essence of Restoration poetry.

The first writer to use consistently the closed couplet was Edmund Waller (1605–1687). As early as 1623, in lines on "His Majesty's Escape at Saint Andrew," he set the steady, measured step which succeeding poets were to follow with military precision for more than a century. His influence, however, became predominant only through the extraordinary energy and success of his pupil, the greatest literary figure of the age of Charles II., John Dryden.

Waller.

Dryden was born in 1631 at Aldwinkle, in Northamptonshire, his parents being of the upper middle class, and of Puritan sympathies. He was sent to Westminster School, and thence, in 1650, to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he remained seven years. During this time his father died, leaving him a small property. His first important verse was an elegy on the death of Cromwell, written in 1658. Two years later, however, Dryden, with the mass of Englishmen, had become an ardent royalist; and he welcomed the return of Charles, in a poem in couplets called *Astræa Redux*. In 1663 he married Lady Elizabeth Howard, a woman of higher rank than his own. It may have been the desirability of increasing his income that, just before this marriage, drove Dryden to write his first comedy, *The Wild Gallant*. It certainly was his accumulating financial necessities that kept him writing for

Dryden's Early Life.

the stage constantly down to 1681. During this period his only poem of importance was *Annus Mirabilis* (1667), a chronicle of events of the preceding year, which had been distinguished by several victories at sea over the Dutch, and by the great London fire.

In 1681 Dryden began the succession of political poems which have generally been accounted his best works. The times were troubled. The court and the country were divided between the partisans of the king's brother, who, though a Papist, was recognized as the heir to the throne, and those of the king's illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth, whom certain persons zealous for the Protestant faith were disposed to set up as a rival candidate. The leader of the latter party was the Earl of Shaftsbury. In the story of the revolt of Absalom against King David, Dryden found an apt parallel to existing circumstances in England; and his satire *Absalom and Achitophel* exposed the relations of Monmouth, the prince, and Shaftsbury, the evil counsellor, with merciless humor. The poem became immensely popular. The next year Dryden followed it with a second blow at Shaftsbury in *The Medal.* Then he turned aside in *MacFlecknoe* to attack a rival poet, Shadwell, who had been employed by the Whigs to reply to *The Medal.* In this year, also, Dryden extended his range into the field of religious controversy, with *Religio Laici,* a very temperate statement of a layman's faith in the Church of England. Three years after this confession of faith, Dryden became a Roman Catholic, and in 1687 he published a political defence of the Church of Rome called *The Hind and the Panther.*

His Satires.

All this political and religious writing brought him distinction, and a modest income. In 1670 he was made Historiographer Royal and Poet Laureate, with a salary of two hundred pounds a year. Later he received a pension of a hundred pounds a year, and in 1683 he was made Collector of the Port of London. All these honors and

emoluments he lost in consequence of the Revolution of 1688 and the accession of William III. He was obliged to betake himself again to the stage as the most lucrative department of literature; to accept aid from private patrons in place of the royal bounty; to contract with Tonson, the bookseller, to produce and deliver ten thousand lines of verse for three hundred guineas, and to undertake various jobs of translation for the same employer. In short, in his old age Dryden was compelled to illustrate almost all the methods by which a literary man could live. Nevertheless, his production in these years added much to his fame. Whatever may be thought of his poetical qualities, at least his literary energy lasted well. His work of this time includes his translation of Virgil; many of his translations from Horace, Ovid, Juvenal, Persius, and Homer; and his renderings into modern English verse of stories from Chaucer, among which the *Palamon and Arcite* is best known. These twice-told tales were published in 1699, in a volume of *Fables*, which contained also his best lyrical poem, "Alexander's Feast."

His Later Works.

During these last years, Dryden lived constantly in London. The coffee-house of that day was the chief place of resort for literary men, much as the Paris café has been in the nineteenth century. At Will's or Button's the wits gathered for exchange of courtesies or for combat; there their admirers or patrons met them; and thence went forth the criticism that made or marred the fortunes of rising men as surely as do the anonymous reviews in a modern literary journal. Dryden frequented Will's, where he was as much a monarch as Ben Jonson had been at the Mermaid, or as, a century later, Samuel Johnson was at the Literary Club. It was to Will's that young Pope was brought to gaze on greatness and be inspired; and it was there also that Dryden dismissed his youthful relative with the pitying "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet." In an age when the

His Last Years.

form of poetry was all but rigidly fixed, the acknowledged master of that form could be as much of a despot as he chose.

The life of Dryden seems at first sight to have been an unheroic, and in some ways an ignoble one. His changes of side from Cromwellian to Royalist, from Anglican to Catholic, stand out in unfavorable contrast to the devotion of men like More and Milton. His concern with the details of party strife is sharply opposed to the ideal morality of Sidney and of Spenser. His indifference and acquiescence in matters of belief seem tame and watery after the flame-like faith of Bunyan. But we must not let such comparisons carry us too far. Dryden illustrates the change from the virtues of Elizabethan chivalry and Cromwellian fanaticism, to the sober commonplace ethics of an era of reason. His tendency to shift his influence to the winning side was in part the patriotism of a sensible man who argued that it mattered comparatively little whether the country was ruled by Protector or King, whether it worshipped according to Anglican or Catholic rites, so long as it was at peace under institutions which were strong enough to curb individual turbulence. Moreover, to Dryden it doubtless seemed far less important that he should preserve an unspotted consistency in his life, than that he should support his family. His was at bottom that uninspiring but necessary virtue which chiefly seeks to do useful work for a living wage.

His Character.

There is also a temptation to extend the first harsh judgment of Dryden's life, to his poetry. It, too, lacks elevation. In the first place the material of much of it is borrowed from other writers. But we must remember that in his long labors of translation and adaptation, Dryden was fulfilling the requirements of his age. The time was one not of creation, but of criticism; one of steady assimilation of what earlier ages had produced. It was especially eager in its effort to diffuse

The Substance of His Poetry.

and appropriate the ideals of Latin civilization, and in this diffusion the work of Dryden counted for much. In the second place, the subject matter of his original poetry, the affairs of church and state, is remote from what we regard as poetic. But here again Dryden was responding to the demands of his age. In the days of Charles II. men were weary of revolution. To them the kingship and the church, Anglican or Catholic, were interesting and beautiful, because they represented, for the mass of the nation, an ideal of individual restraint; just as to an earlier time the boundless self-assertion of Faustus and Tamburlaine had been interesting and beautiful for the opposite reason.

Not only the substance, but the form of Dryden's verse has been a ground for detraction from his fame. Few poets of the modern world have maintained such strict uniformity. With the exception of the lyrics in his dramas, of several odes, and of two early poems in the heroic stanza, Dryden cultivated steadily the heroic couplet. Historically the account of this form has been given (page 177). The heroic couplet appealed with irresistible force to an age weary of the conceits of feeble romanticists, and desiring above all, uniformity, precision, and regularity. It was, moreover, a vehicle strikingly adapted to the conveyance of the literary baggage of the time. When at the close of *Religio Laici* Dryden says,

The Quality of His Poetry.

> And this unpolished rugged verse I chose
> As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose,

his second line may be taken as referring to his poems in general. In them we look for the virtues of prose rather than for those of poetry, for the utilitarian qualities, neatness, clearness, energy, rather than for imaginative suggestion; we look for epigram in place of metaphor, for boldly marked rhythm instead of elusive harmony.

Although in the great body of his work Dryden kept to the couplet form, his odes, and the songs with which his dramas are strewn, show that he possessed power over a variety of metres. The two odes for Saint Cecilia's Day, especially the second, called "Alexander's Feast," illustrate his skill in making his lines march to the measure of his thought. It is true, even in his lyrics Dryden's charm is rather one of line and general movement than of phrase or word. He has little of the magic and glamour that belong to poets of deeper, though perhaps less ample, inspiration. His best quality is artistic and literary, not imaginative.

Dryden was not only the foremost poet, but also the most copious dramatist, and the chief critic, of his time. The age of the Restoration was, as we have already noted, a period of assimilation rather than of creation, a time when men were interested in testing the product of earlier ages, and in winnowing the good from the bad. This interest accounts for the fact that to many of his works Dryden prefixed one or more critical essays in the form of dedications or prefaces, in which he discussed the leading artistic questions of the day. Among these essays the most important are "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy" (1668), "A Defence of an Essay of Dramatic Poesy" (1668), "Of Heroic Plays" (1672), the "Essay on Satire" (1693), and the Preface to the *Fables* (1699). It is to be noted that these writings were all "occasional," each put forth to answer a particular purpose; and in the success with which they fulfilled their purpose they are one important sign of literary progress. The virtue of efficiency in prose style was strengthened enormously by Dryden's practice.

Dryden as Critic.

Dryden's prose lacks the personal eccentricity which we find in Burton, Browne, and their contemporaries; and it is usually without the artificial decoration which marks the style of Lyly and Sidney. Dryden did not look upon prose as important enough to beautify. He occupied himself

with the form as little as might be, except to secure its fitness for a well-defined end. Moreover, by his adoption of the modern sentence in place of the unit of great and unequal length used by Raleigh and Milton, Dryden carried out in prose a change exactly analogous to that accomplished in verse by his adoption of the couplet in place of the stanza. In other words he did for prose what he did for poetry: he reduced the unit of treatment to manageable size; set an example of correctness; and finally, by his authority, did much to establish such a standard of taste as rendered impossible the eccentricities to which the preceding century had been indulgent.

Dryden's Prose.

In both his poetry and his prose Dryden represents the spirit of his age as it showed itself in dealing with its most important problems of life and art. He is at bottom a serious and intellectual master. For the more naïve and unconscious expression of the time we must turn to others. Like Elizabeth and Charles I., Charles II. kept in some sort a literary court, of which lyric poetry and satire were the language. The courtly poets of the time, the successors of the cavaliers, caught from the king an attitude of moral indifference and social flippancy. In their circles the most popular work was a fierce and scurrilous satire upon the Puritan, Samuel Butler's *Hudibras*. Butler (1612–1680) was doubtless meditating his attack during the years of the Protectorate, when he was acting as private secretary to a Puritan nobleman. Three years after the accession of Charles II., he published three cantos of a poem in which the vices of the Puritan period, hypocrisy, sanctimoniousness, and intolerance, are presented with savage exaggeration in the person of Sir Hudibras. This knight, with his squire Ralpho, passes through a series of quixotic adventures, which are continued in further instalments of the poem, published in 1664 and 1678.

Butler's "Hudibras."

While Butler and the cavalier poets were embodying the mood of the aristocracy, Bunyan was writing his *Pilgrim's Progress* for the serious lower class, where Puritanism still survived. Between these extremes, however, we have an order that was to make its presence felt increasingly from this time on, the middle or burgher class; and as it happens, this class had, in the late seventeenth century, a representative figure almost as salient as Bunyan. Samuel Pepys (1633–1703) was a busy man of affairs, a clerk of the Navy Board, and later Secretary of the Admiralty under James II. Between 1660 and 1669 he kept a diary in cipher, which he left with his library to Magdalen College, Cambridge. It was deciphered and published, at first with omissions, later in full, in the course of the nineteenth century, and was recognized at once as a personal document of great interest.

Samuel Pepys.

Pepys's diary is scarcely to be called literature. It is a transcript of the observations, doings, thoughts, and feelings of a commonplace burgher, all set down with the greatest fidelity. If Pepys goes on a picnic he mentions the time of starting, the constituents of the luncheon, the substance of the conversation by the way, the company he met, the sheep which he saw ("the most pleasant and innocent sight that ever I saw in my life"), the shepherd whose little boy was reading the Bible to him, the flowers, the glow-worms which came out in the evening, and the slight accident by which he sprained his foot. In its detail it reflects the patient, industrious habits by which business and science were to thrive in the next century,—for Pepys was a scientist and President of the Royal Society. In its uniformity of tone, its lack of emphasis and dramatic interest, so different from Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*, it illustrates again the sober modernity which the citizen's life was beginning to assume. In its worldliness, its reflection of perfectly unashamed

Pepys's Diary.

delight in mere comfort, well-being, and success, it shows the bourgeois ideal of life. In its suggestions of trifling moral laxity, it perhaps testifies to the complacence with which even safe and honest burghers saw the natural life free itself from Puritan scruples. And finally, the pleasure in his own life, which sustained the author in the mechanical toil of recording its phenomena, is to be connected with the interest in human life in general, which constituted the force behind the development of realistic fiction in the following century.

The Restoration Drama

When the theatres were closed in 1642, the succession of great Jacobean dramatists had nearly come to an end, Shirley alone being alive. However, the drama retained its hold on the masses; even under Cromwell, the playwright Davenant obtained permission to give a play with a musical accompaniment, *The Siege of Rhodes*. To this opera Dryden attributed the beginning of the dominant fashion of the time in tragedy, the heroic play, to which type many of Dryden's own dramas belong. The heroic play, though by no means an imitation of French tragedy, owed something to the example of Corneille, especially its heightening of characters to heroic proportions, and probably also its use of rhyme. Dryden defended the use of rhyme, in the dedication to one of his early plays, on the ground that "it bounds and circumscribes the fancy. For imagination in a poet is a faculty so wild and lawless, that like an high ranging spaniel it must have clogs tied to it lest it outrun the judgment." This philosophy, so typical of the time, did not prevent Dryden from pushing his characters into unnatural extravagance of passion; a fault which, as it appears in *The Indian Queen* (1664), *The Indian Emperor* (1665), and *The Conquest of Granada* (1670), was caricatured in

The Heroic Play.

The Rehearsal, a famous mock drama by the Duke of Buckingham and others.

In the last of his heroic plays, *Aurengzebe* (1675), Dryden confesses in the prologue that he "grows weary of his long-loved mistress, Rhyme." Accordingly his next play, *All for Love* (1678), a rehandling of the story of Antony and Cleopatra, he wrote in blank verse. This play is commonly regarded as his dramatic masterpiece. In addition to his tragedies, Dryden wrote a number of comedies in prose, and tragi-comedies in a mixture of prose and verse, most of which are too broad for modern reading. Dryden's Later Dramas.

A writer who on two occasions equalled or surpassed Dryden, Thomas Otway (1651–1685), was an unsuccessful actor, who turned to writing plays. His *Don Carlos* (1675), written in rhymed couplets, won for him his first success. When Dryden abandoned rhyme, the world of playwrights changed with him; and Otway's second important play, *The Orphan* (1680), was in blank verse. The situation, turning upon the love of two brothers for Monimia, the orphan ward of their father, is one which Ford might have created. In working it out, Otway is relentless; he has evolved from it one of the cruelest of English tragedies. In his power of deepening the horror by a lighter, simpler touch, pitiful as a strain of music, he reminds us again of the later Elizabethans, especially of Webster. Even more successful than *The Orphan* was *Venice Preserved* (1682), in which, as in *The Orphan,* Otway caught something of the greatness of handling characteristic of an earlier time. His plays have the genuine passion which Dryden lacked, and they are not marred by the distortions of human life and character that abound both in Dryden and in the Jacobean dramatists. Thomas Otway.

The tragedy of the Restoration has, in the main, only a literary interest, as a survival of the great dramatic period, and as an illustration of foreign influences. The Resto-

ration comedy, however, is a genuine reflection of the temper, if not of the actual life, of the upper classes of the nation; and as such it has a sociological as well as a literary interest. As practised by Shakespeare, English comedy had been romantic in spirit. However seriously it had been concerned with the essentials of human nature, it had had comparatively little to do with the circumstances of actual human life. In Ben Jonson and Middleton, and especially in the latest of the Jacobeans, Shirley, we find more realistic treatment of the setting, the social surroundings, of the play. Following their lead, and stimulated by the example of Molière, the comedians of the Restoration devoted themselves specifically to picturing the external details of life, the fashions of the time, its manners, its speech, its interests. For scenes they turned to the most interesting places they knew, the drawing-rooms, the coffee-houses, the streets and gardens of London. Their characters were chiefly people of fashion, and their plots, for the most part, were love intrigues; both often enough improbable and uninteresting. For these deficiencies, however, the dramatists made up by the brilliancy of their dialogue. In tendency these plays are, almost without exception, immoral. They represent the reaction of the play-going public against Puritanism. They are anti-social, in that they represent social institutions, particularly marriage, in an obnoxious or ridiculous light; but they are not romantic or revolutionary. There is in them never an honest protest against institutions, never a genuine note of revolt. Conventions are accepted to be played with and attacked, merely by way of giving opportunity for clever, corrupt talk, or of giving point to an intrigue.

Restoration Comedy.

The first of this school of comedians was Sir George Etherege, an Englishman who had been educated at Paris, and who there had seen the comedies of Molière. Etherege was followed by William Wycherley (1640–1715), whose

best plays are *The Country Wife* (1673), and *The Plain Dealer* (1674). Both are borrowed in outline from Molière, but their moral atmosphere is that of the corrupt court of Charles II., where Wycherley was a favorite. William Congreve (1670–1729) was a far more brilliant playwright. His masterpieces, *Love for Love* and *The Way of the World*, appeared in 1695 and 1700. Congreve carries the interest of dialogue, of the verbal fence between character and character, to its extreme development; less gratuitously lax than Wycherley, he is, notwithstanding, too reckless, cynical, and corrupt for modern readers.

Wycherley and Congreve.

It has been pointed out that one effect of the age that succeeded the Restoration, was to organize society, to restrain the license of the individual. The anti-social influence of the plays of the time was clearly perceived, and protest was not lacking. It took time for the protest to gather force, in face of the spirit of wild reaction against all that savored of Puritanism; but in 1698 a clergyman, Jeremy Collier, published his *Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage*, and Dryden, who was one of the dramatists particularly attacked, admitted the justice of the rebuke. Its immediate effect was not sufficient to do away with the coarseness of Restoration comedy, which appears to the full in Sir John Vanbrugh (1666–1726): but an improvement is noticeable in the works of George Farquhar (1678–1707), the last of the school; and in Steele's plays the drama is in full alliance with the forces which were making for morality and decent living.

The Protest of Jeremy Collier.

CHAPTER X

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: THE REIGN OF CLASSICISM

THE history of the early part of the eighteenth century shows a continuation of the social and literary forces which had begun with the Restoration. It was a period in which imagination slept, and in which the sense of the temporal realities of life was strong. It was a period of criticism rather than of creation, a period in which regularity and perfection of literary form were of more importance than originality of thought. It was an age of interest in the development of society and of institutions, rather than in the assertion of the individual. In this particular, indeed, it went beyond the Restoration period. We have seen that the literature, especially the drama, of this latter epoch, was marked by something of the license of the Renaissance. The protest of Jeremy Collier against the stage, in 1698, was typical of the attitude of the new century, which realized and feared the anti-social effect of vice. These tendencies toward realism of subject matter, toward technical perfection of form, and toward social usefulness of purpose, are notably illustrated by the three chief figures of the literature of the age of Queen Anne,—Swift, Pope, and Addison.

General Characteristics.

The first of them and the greatest, Jonathan Swift, was born in Ireland of English parents, in 1667. He was a posthumous son, and he grew up to share his mother's poverty. He was sent to the University of Dublin, where, as he says, he was "stopped of his degree for dulness and unsufficiency; and at last hardly admitted in a manner little to his credit." In 1689 he

Jonathan Swift.

left Ireland to take a position as under-secretary to a distant relative, Sir William Temple, with whom he remained intermittently for some years, reading aloud to his patron, writing at dictation, keeping accounts, and cursing his fate. While in this service he wrote *The Battle of the Books*, a contribution to the controversy which Temple was carrying on with Bentley, the great scholar, as to the comparative merit of ancient and modern writers. About this time, also, he wrote a satire on the divisions of Christianity, called *A Tale of a Tub*. Neither work was published until 1704. With Temple's help he entered the church; and after his patron's death he returned to Ireland as chaplain to Lord Berkeley, by whom he was given the living of Laracor.

Then began the great period of Swift's life, the time of his political power. During the reign of William III., party strife was bitter between the Whigs, who supported the King in his foreign policy of resistance to Louis XIV. of France, and the Tories, who opposed him; and this struggle was continued in the reign of Queen Anne. Almost all the prominent literary men of the time were engaged on one side or the other. Swift, who was frequently in London promoting his candidacy for offices in the church as they fell vacant, at first wrote on the Whig side; but in 1710 he joined the Tories, who were just coming into power. The Tory ministry, of which Lord Bolingbroke was a member, was resolved to stop the war with France; and in defence of this policy Swift put out one of his strongest political writings, *The Conduct of the Allies*. His life during these years is reflected in his *Journal to Stella*, a daily account of his doings which he wrote for his friend, Esther Johnson. Here we find Swift playing the part in which he most delighted, that of a man of affairs, active, successful, and powerful. He records with gusto his hours spent with the rulers of the country; their politeness, and his own half-

His Political Career.

contemptuous familiarity; his ability to serve his friends and to punish his enemies. In 1713, as the price of his support of the Tory government, he was named Dean of St. Patrick's in Dublin, a promotion little to his taste. The next year the Tories went out of power, discredited by Bolingbroke's intrigues with the Pretender; and Swift returned to Ireland.

Here his unconquerable activity found vent in defending the Irish, or rather the Englishmen who lived in Ireland, from the careless tyranny of the government. In this endeavor he published *The Drapier's Letters*, most of them in 1724, as a protest against debasing the Irish coinage. In 1726 he took the manuscript of his most famous work, *Gulliver's Travels*, to London for publication, and the next year he returned thither to taste the pleasure of a great literary success. This, as all else in his life, seemed to turn only to disappointment. In 1728 Miss Johnson, the "Stella" of the Journal, died. Whether or not it is true, as some think, that Swift was secretly married to her, she was his closest friend, and her death left him desolate. As the years passed, his hatred for the world grew more intense, and his satire more bitter. A disease from which he had suffered at intervals gained rapidly upon him, resulting in deafness and giddiness; and he suffered also from attacks of epilepsy and insanity. After years of gloom and agony, death came slowly upon him. He died in 1745.

His Later Life.

It is evident from this narrative that, to a great extent, Swift's writings were occasional, and grew out of the circumstances of his life. He was not a professional writer; with one or two exceptions, his works were published anonymously. He was a man of affairs, who became a man of letters because literature was a means by which affairs could be directed. His writings must be regarded, then, as one expression among others, of energy turned to practical ends; as one evidence among

Swift's Practical Nature.

others, of his preternatural activity. For Swift lived hard. "There is no such thing," he wrote to a friend, "as a fine old gentleman; if the man had a mind or body worth a farthing they would have worn him out long ago."

This need of exercise shows itself not only in his serious preoccupation with the life of his time, but also in his gigantic sense of play. The anecdotes related of him by his earlier biographers are legion, most of them turning upon the translation of some whim into practical form, usually as a grotesque joke. The tale of his dispersing a crowd gathered to witness an eclipse, by sending a message that, according to the Dean's orders, the eclipse would be put off for a day; of his impersonating a poor usher at a reception, to draw the contempt of a rich fool; and, of his disguising himself as a fiddler at a beggar's wedding, to discover the arts by which impostors live,—all these bear testimony to that restlessness which could not be satisfied by work alone. With this lighter side of Swift's nature are to be connected the works by which he is chiefly known, his satires—*The Tale of a Tub* and *Gulliver's Travels.*

His Activity.

Once, indeed, this love of a practical joke was directly responsible for some of Swift's most characteristic writing. A certain Partridge was in the habit of issuing an almanac, with predictions of events to fall out in the next year. This impostor Swift exposed in a set of "Predictions for the year 1708," one of which was the death of Partridge himself, who, according to the prophecy, should "infallibly die upon the 29th of March, about eleven at night, of a raging fever." This pamphlet was published over the name Isaac Bickerstaff. On the 30th of March, Swift published a letter supposed to be written by a revenue officer to a certain nobleman, giving an account of Partridge's last days and death. He also wrote "An Elegy of Mr. Partridge." Of course, Partridge hastened in triumph to assure the world that he

The Partridge Predictions.

was not dead; but Swift promptly came back with "A Vindication of Isaac Bickerstaff," in which, after rebuking Partridge for his impudence, he proved by various logical demonstrations that Partridge certainly died "within half an hour of the time foretold."

This skit is broadly characteristic of the whole spirit and method of Swift's work, in that it exposes a sham or an evil by setting up a more monstrous imposition against it, and defends the latter with ironical seriousness; the whole being permeated so thoroughly by malicious and contemptuous fooling that one hesitates to say whether it may or may not have been written with a certain amount of reforming zeal. In Swift's works generally there is this double aspect of earnestness and play. In "A Modest Proposal, for preventing the children of the poor in Ireland from being a burden," the terrible suffering in Ireland is revealed in the mocking suggestion that the poor should devote themselves to rearing children to be killed and eaten. *A Tale of a Tub,* with its bitter reflections upon the spiritual history of man since the advent of Christianity, is on its face the story of three stupid brothers quarrelling over the inheritance of their father. *Gulliver's Travels* is, in form, a sort of *Robinson Crusoe,* yet it is full of satiric intention.

Swift's Method.

Gulliver is shipwrecked first at Lilliput, where the inhabitants are six inches high,—except their emperor, "taller by almost the breadth of my nail than any of his court, which alone is enough to strike an awe into the beholders." Here the satire obviously consists in showing human motives at work on a small scale, and in suggesting, by the likeness of the Lilliputians to ourselves, the littleness of human affairs. The arts by which the officers of the government keep their places, such as cutting capers on a tight-rope for the entertainment of the emperor, remind us of the quality of statesmanship both in Swift's day and our own; the dispute over the

"Gulliver's Travels."

question at which end an egg should properly be broken, that plunged Lilliput into civil war, is a comment on the seriousness of party divisions in the greater world. Gulliver's next voyage, to Brobdingnag, brings him to a people as large in comparison with man as the Lilliputians are small. Once more his adventures are a tale of wonder, behind which lurks Swift's contempt for humanity. Gulliver tells the giant beings by whom he is surrounded, and in comparison with whom he is a mere manikin, of the world from which he has come. Among other things, he tells of the invention of gunpowder, and the use of instruments of warfare. "The king was struck with horror at the description I had given of those terrible engines. He was amazed how so impotent and grovelling an insect as I (these were his expressions) could entertain such inhuman ideas." Finally, after a third voyage to Laputa and other curious places, Gulliver makes his fourth journey, to the land of the Houyhnhnms, where horses are the self-conscious rulers and masters, and where the human animal is in a state of servitude and degradation. Here again Gulliver relates to his incredulous hosts the follies and cruelties of men. But the fiercest satire is in the picture of the Yahoo, the human beast, in which the worst of man is once for all told.

This double point of view, this wavering between jest and earnest, is not only superficially characteristic of Swift's writing; it seems also to have been deeply rooted in his mental constitution. It is almost as if he could never be quite sure that the world was worth his zeal; as if he never wished to compromise himself as a reformer, or to cut himself off from the possibility of falling back upon jest. This attitude on his part must be understood in order to apprehend his relation to the times in which he lived. As has been said, one task of the eighteenth century was to revise and enforce standards of taste and living. Toward this task Swift took two opposite positions. In

his contempt for man he could, when convenient, defend social and intellectual conventions, in the belief that shams and delusions were restraints necessary to the orderly government of the world; that they were, so to speak, wiles by which the intelligent Houyhnhnms controlled the unspeakable Yahoos about them. But then it is quite open to him to turn about and cry, "What business has the world of Yahoos with standards at all? Man being what he is, decency and comeliness are but conventions." And he proceeds to attack them. He takes a malicious joy in shocking persons whose characters are founded upon mere respectability. To this instinct for revolt must be ascribed the obscenity with which, especially in his poems, Swift insulted the growing modesty and propriety of his countrymen.

Swift's Attitude toward his Time.

It is the thoroughness of Swift's pessimism, his complete distrust of the world, that gives to him his singularity and peculiar impressiveness among English writers. It would be fruitless to deny that in this pessimism there is something stimulating, something awakening; perhaps because it is a change from the conventional mode in which we are taught to look at the world. The real distinction in his view, his disregard of the accepted, the trite, the commonplace, all serve to startle us into eager attention. His keenness calls for answering alertness in ourselves; his suggestiveness is tonic; even his coarseness contains something of vigorous criticism that will not let us rest in conventional opinions, but bids us prove all things and call everything by its true name.

His Distinction.

The practical spirit which Swift brought to his writing, his intention to make it serve a turn and accomplish a purpose, is reflected in his style. First among his merits as a writer is his clearness. Further, his contempt for all kinds of sham led him to despise literary affectation; directness and simplicity are the virtues by

His Style.

which he sets most store. Indeed, if anything, his style is too severe, too sternly practical, too reserved, too dry. It represents men and things in too hard a light, with too sharp an outline, without the softening and color which come from a sympathetic temperament. Yet with all this practical downrightness, Swift's style is full of finesse. A more subtle instrument, capable of more delicate persiflage, of more elaborate innuendo, it would be difficult to find. So little obvious are its devices, so persistent is its plainness, that we cease to suspect it; but the writer neither slumbers nor sleeps. Always conscious of an end beyond the admitted one, always advancing on it stroke by stroke, he surprises us out of the security into which we have been lulled, and startles us into keenness and nervousness by the paradox which lurked all the while behind the sober, grave exterior. Of obvious decoration, such as balance, rhythm, antithesis—the half poetic qualities of earlier prose—Swift has little. Indeed, it is clear that the nakedness and simplicity of his style were necessary to the rapidity and address of his attack. In the heavy rhetorical panoply of Euphues or Jeremy Taylor he would have been as helpless as David in the armor of Saul. Absolute, unmitigated prose he wrote—the quintessence of prose.

The bulk of Swift's political writing appeared in pamphlets, but he used also the periodical form; he conducted the paper in the Tory interest, called *The Examiner*, to which Addison, the chief literary man among the Whigs, replied in the *Whig Examiner*. **Periodical Literature.** The idea of the periodical appearance of a party organ was suggested by the newspapers, of which the first had appeared in 1622, Butter's *Weekly Newes from Italy and Germanie*. These early newspapers were at first little more than meagre chronicles of events. Gradually they came to include discussion of lighter matters, chiefly in the form of answers to questions. *Defoe's Review* (see

page 232) contained a separate department called "Advice from the Scandalous Club, being a weekly history of Nonsense, Impertinence, Vice, and Debauchery." That province of journalism which lies between news and politics, was not adequately possessed, however, until, in 1709, there appeared a periodical of which the object was to "observe upon the pleasurable as well as the busy part of mankind." This was *The Tatler*, founded by Richard Steele (1672–1729), who was soon joined in the enterprise by his friend, Joseph Addison (1672–1719).

The Tatler.

The Tatler appeared three times a week. Each number consisted of several letters dated from the different coffee-houses of London; those from the Saint James being devoted to foreign and domestic affairs, those from Will's to poetry and the drama, those from White's to "gallantry, pleasure, and entertainment." There were also papers dated "From my own apartment," which dealt with miscellaneous topics, personal or social. It was in these last that the authors carried out most fully the object which they set before themselves, "to expose the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity, and affectation, and to recommend a general simplicity in our dress, our discourse, and our behavior." Although *The Tatler* appealed to the public without distinction of party, it was colored by Steele's Whig views. Accordingly, when the authors wished to avoid politics altogether they abandoned *The Tatler*, replacing it by *The Spectator* (1711), in which Addison took the chief part.

Joseph Addison.

Although Addison and Steele are thus remembered for their effort to lead literature away from politics, both were party men. Addison first attracted notice while at Oxford, by a Latin poem on the Treaty of Ryswick; in recognition of this effort he received a pension of three hundred pounds a year, enabling him to travel abroad. After his return, the Whigs needed a poet to

celebrate the Duke of Marlborough's victory of Blenheim; and the commission fell to Addison. His poem, "The Campaign," which contained one very effective panegyric passage, gained for its author various honors and preferments; and until his death in 1719 he was almost constantly in office. Indeed, Addison's career affords the best example of the high rewards which the service of party offered in the early eighteenth century to literary men. Even his tragedy, *Cato*, which was presented in 1713, owed its great popularity to a supposed parallel between the struggles of parties at Rome and the contemporary political situation in England; and as neither party could allow the other to take to itself the platitudes about liberty with which the play is strewn, Whigs and Tories alike attended the performances, vying with each other in the violence of their applause.

Addison's Character.

No character in English letters is better known or more generally admired than Addison. This power of attracting admiration is largely due to a certain classic quality which showed itself in his literary ideals, in his pure, regular style, in the just appreciation of his criticism, and in his singularly correct sense of conduct. His taste was nearly faultless, and taste did for him what it should do for anyone; it saved him from blunders and follies. In his life as in his writing, what he did was well done. Every stroke that went to the presentation of his character in bodily form seems to have been laid on with conscious care and conscious pride. The last touch of all, as he lay on his death-bed, and turning to his step-son bade him "See in what peace a Christian can die," expresses the mood in which his whole life was lived.

This mood colored most of Addison's writing. The papers which he contributed to *The Tatler*, *The Spectator*, and other periodicals, are for the most part essays in the art of living. They illustrate the practical nature of his own culture, his easy, skilled mastery of life. To the

world of the eighteenth century, with its crudeness, its coarseness, its grotesqueness, as revealed in the drawings of Hogarth, Addison came much as Matthew Arnold came to the later nineteenth century, with its materialism and its trust in machinery. Both were missionaries, Addison the more successful because the more tactful. His task too was simpler, to enforce ideas of civilization, and in particular to overcome the anti-social tendencies of both Puritan and Cavalier, preserving the zeal for conduct of the former without his gloom and intolerance, and the lightness and gayety of the latter without his license. Thus we find many of Addison's papers directed against the coarser vices of the time, against gambling, drinking, swearing, indecency of conversation, cruelty, practical joking, duelling. Others attack the triviality of life, special follies and foibles of dress, of manners, or of thought; others, the lack of order and comfort in the life of the community. Addison cared also for the literary cultivation of his readers, as is shown by such papers as the famous series of criticisms on Milton. Finally, he made a novel contribution to literature in a series of sketches of character and contemporary types,—of himself as the Spectator, of Sir Andrew Freeport the merchant, of Sir Roger de Coverley the country gentleman, of Will Honeycomb the man of fashion. These figures typified conveniently the interests of the public to which *The Spectator* appealed; but more than this they define themselves as persons, fitting members of the great company of characters who live in English fiction from Chaucer to George Meredith. One of them at least, Sir Roger de Coverley, to whose presentation both Addison and Steele contributed, is drawn with genuine affection, as an embodiment of healthy, kindly, natural virtue, touched with just enough humor to make the picture convincing and wholly winning.

His Mission.

In his treatment of these various subjects Addison displays the graces of style which are the expression of his

character. He has perfect confidence in his position, and in his style sureness goes hand in hand with absolute lightness of touch. His sense of humor saves him from putting himself on the defensive by over-emphasis. Even such a serious subject as the separation between men on political grounds, he treats by a playful comparison with the fashion of ladies in wearing plaster patches of different shapes on their faces. This easy tone comes from Addison's moderation and reasonableness, and from his genuine good-nature. Satirist though he is, he is never misanthropic. The difference between his satire and Swift's appears in the contrast between his bantering analysis of a "Coquette's Heart," and Swift's savage "Letter to a Young Lady."

His Method.

Technically, Addison's style shows how rapidly English prose was approaching its perfection. For the more regular virtues, clearness, facility, grace, it has always been a model. Its best encomium was pronounced by Dr. Johnson when he wrote, "Whoever wishes to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the volumes of Addison."

His Style.

Despite the close connection between Addison and Steele, in friendship, political interests, and literary work, the two men were very different. Addison's father was a clergyman. Addison himself intended to take orders, and throughout his life showed something of the remoteness and coldness of clerical culture. "He looked," as a contemporary said with some scorn, "like a parson in a tie-wig." Steele, on the contrary, was for some years a soldier, and never lost the bearing of his profession. He was Captain Steele and wore a sword to the end of his days.

Addison and Steele.

Steele's life was a miscellaneous one, filled with all sorts of ventures, literary, political, and commercial. He left Oxford without his degree, to enlist as a soldier. He for-

sook the army to become an active pamphleteer and journalist in the interest of the Whigs, by whom he was given various government positions. He was elected to Parliament, but was expelled from the House for writing a political pamphlet. He wrote several plays, and was for a time director of Drury Lane Theatre. Altogether his life was a thing of fragments. His character, too, showed certain flaws and lapses, faults of a generous spontaneous nature; and to these his writings in a measure served to call attention. While a soldier he wrote *The Christian Hero*, a manual of personal and domestic virtues; his plays were a bit superfluously moral; in *The Tatler* he appeared as a preacher. This discrepancy between his personal life and the tenor of much of his writings, laid Steele open to gibe and sneer; but there is an honest human quality about his inconsistencies, that gives him, after all, a charm which his greater contemporaries lack. Whether as Christian or as man of the world, Steele was always himself, and if he did not erect a palatial character like Addison's, he built a genial dwelling-place where all the world was welcome.

Steele's Character.

The inconsistency in Steele's life is reflected in his style. He has two manners, one eminent, gracious, dignified, the style which corresponds to his moods of elevation and didacticism; the other careless, flexible, free, like his ordinary life. This second manner is best seen in his letters to his wife, which, in their delightful frankness and their abandonment to the feeling of the moment, show him in his most attractive aspect. They prove that the lightness and ease which mark *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, qualities which in Addison were the fruit of cultivation, were entirely native to Steele.

His Style.

Addison and Steele were moralists, and their doctrine is in a high degree characteristic of their time. It deals with the material and superficial aspects of living; it represents the effort of literature to support the conventions in accord-

ance with which life was ordering itself. This attitude, however wholesome and necessary, involved a tendency to set an excessive value on outward behavior as distinct from character, a tendency which becomes more marked in a writer of somewhat later date, Lord Chesterfield (1694–1773). The principles of good form, for which Chesterfield's name is a by-word, he expounds fully in his *Letters to His Son*, which set forth a system of conduct based frankly upon scepticism as to the reality of morals. Historically Chesterfield represents the extreme swing of the pendulum that was set in motion by Steele and Addison. With him the decorum and urbanity inculcated by *The Spectator* have become the major ends of life, the chief business of a gentleman.

Lord Chesterfield.

Chesterfield typifies one phase of the rather shallow positivism of the century, its refusal to go behind what appealed immediately to the senses, to believe in what it could not see. Politeness can be seen, felt, valued; hence it is real. Goodness of heart, virtue, may exist or not; we cannot be sure: they are so easy to simulate, so hard to test, that the wise man prefers to put no trust in them, and confines his interest to deportment. Such is Chesterfield's view.

There is no sharp dividing line between the prose writers and the poets of the early eighteenth century. The practical spirit of the age, which limited the realm of art to the interests of actual life, made the material of prose and poetry much the same; and owing to the character of couplet verse, the typical virtues of poetry were not very different from those of prose. Of the writers already discussed, Swift and Addison were poets as well as prose men. The greatest poet of the period, however, the direct continuator of the tradition of Dryden, and the most brilliant man of letters of the early part of the century, was Alexander Pope.

Prose and Poetry.

Pope was born in 1688, of Catholic parents. By reason of the sweeping laws against the entrance of Catholics into public service, he was shut out from the ordinary career of Englishmen in Parliament, the church, or the army. In consequence he was among his contemporaries almost the sole example of an author who was entirely a man of letters; the events of his life are altogether literary events. He began his career early. His *Pastorals*, written when he was seventeen, were published in 1709. The *Essay on Criticism* two years later, attracted Addison's notice; and Pope's other early poems, "Windsor Forest," "Eloisa to Abelard," and above all *The Rape of the Lock*, of which the first draft appeared in 1712, confirmed him in his position at the head of English poetry. About 1713 he undertook the greatest venture of his life, the translation of Homer, which he did not complete until 1725. One important effect of the translation, on Pope's own career and on the literature of the time, is to be noted. From the publishers and from his sales to subscribers, Pope obtained more than five thousand pounds for the *Iliad*, and two-thirds of this sum for the *Odyssey* (on which most of the work was done by others),—much the greatest pecuniary reward which up to that time had been received by any English author. It made Pope independent of patronage and politics; and it marks the opening of a new era in the social status of authors, one in which they looked to the public alone for support.

Alexander Pope.

The profits of his translation enabled Pope to buy a small estate at Twickenham, on the Thames near London. This he fitted up in the mock classical style which the age affected in other things besides literature. He subdued nature to taste by landscape-gardening, until his few acres must have seemed a miniature Versailles. He scattered statuary and temples about in artistic contrast to the woods and lawns; and as his crowning achievement he built his famous grotto ornamented with

His Later Life.

mirrors. At Twickenham Pope lived the remainder of his life, secluded from the cares and struggles of the world, but very constantly occupied with his own relations to it. Here he entertained his friends, Swift, Arbuthnot, Gay, and others, with whom he formed a literary partnership known as the Scriblerus Club. It was in connection with this partnership that he published in 1728 a great onslaught on their literary foes, entitled *The Dunciad.* At Twickenham also Pope saw much of Bolingbroke, and under his influence wrote the *Essay on Man,* published in 1732 and 1734. The remainder of his work consists of the *Moral Epistles* (satires in imitation of Horace), the "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot," which is Pope's chief defence of himself, and the "Epilogue to the Satires." These were published before 1737, after which date Pope wrote little. He died in 1744.

Pope's claim to the first place among the poets of his time cannot be gainsaid, but his true place among the poets of all time is a matter of dispute. At the outset it must be recognized that certain sources of power were denied him, partly in consequence of the nature of the period in which he lived, partly by reason of the deficiencies of his own temperament. The age was one in which sympathy for nature and for humanity was limited, and in this matter Pope shared the blindness of his age. Moreover, Pope was from birth sickly and feeble; strong passion, great emotion, richness of life, were beyond his experience. His bodily ailments checked the growth of his character; he remained to the end a suspicious, deceitful child. Accordingly, we miss in his poetry greatness of feeling for the natural world and for the world of man, as well as greatness of human personality. That such a man should become a poet at all is as wonderful as that a deaf man should be a composer, or a blind man a sculptor. That he should be the typical poet of his age shows how limited was the con-

Pope's Limitations.

ception which then prevailed of the nature and function of poetry.

But though certain qualities which we expect to find in poetry are necessarily absent in Pope, these were replaced, at least for his contemporaries, by others. First of all, he owed his success to his marvellous skill in directing the sole recognized vehicle of poetry, the heroic couplet.

His Poetic Qualities.

He declares that as a child he "lisped in numbers, for the numbers came." But he was not satisfied with precocious amateurism. One of his earliest friends and critics, William Walsh, pointed out to him that "though we had had several great poets we never had any one great poet that was correct." Correctness, accordingly, Pope made his aim from the first. Correctness requires patience, and genius for taking pains Pope had in abundance. Nor did he sacrifice to mere exactness of metre and rhyme the other virtues of couplet verse, compression, epigrammatic force, and brilliancy of diction. Still, it is not to be wondered at that, in the long process of polishing and revising to suit a standard of extreme nicety, he lost something of the spontaneity of his first attempts.

The importance of technical qualities in the eyes of Pope's public is attested by the success of the *Essay on Criticism*, in which he set forth the artistic principles of the time with special reference to poetry. In this discussion he expresses the chief canon of the age in the direction to follow Nature, but Nature methodized by rules, for "to copy Nature is to copy them." The substance of the poem is made up of commonplaces, for Pope and his readers believed that there was nothing new under the sun; but these commonplaces are given the most apt, the most chiselled form, a form in which they are fitted to survive as part of the common wisdom of the race.

"The Essay on Criticism."

Pope's comprehension of the artistic demands of his time,

and his rhetorical skill, fitted him admirably for the work which took up most of the middle years of his life, that of translation. As has been noted, the age was one which depended for material largely on more creative epochs in the past, but which, confident in its own civilization, insisted on having that material treated in accordance with its own taste. Of this adaptation Pope did much. He translated from Ovid, Horace, and Statius; and he modernized Chaucer and Donne. But the most notable of all his attempts in this direction is his translation of Homer. The attitude of the eighteenth century toward the greatest of the classics is shown by a line in the *Essay on Criticism*, which declares that Homer and Nature are the same, the highest object of study and imitation. Pope's own knowledge of Homer was second-hand and inaccurate; he was an indifferent Greek scholar, and was forced to depend on Latin and English translations. But the impossibility of his making a literally faithful translation left him the freer to turn the material of the Greek poems into the form in which it was most fitted to become a part of the culture of his own time. Not only does Homer, in Pope's hands, become an eighteenth century poet, by virtue of his submission to the literary fashions of the day,—the heroic couplet, and conventional poetic diction,—but even the characters, the manners, the ethical ideals of primitive Greece are run over into eighteenth century moulds. Just as to the cloudy mediæval imagination the heroes of Troy became knights, so to Pope's more enlightened understanding they are statesmen and party leaders, treating each other with parliamentary courtesy, and talking of virtue, patriotism, and fame, as glibly and eloquently as Bolingbroke himself. In the loftier parts of Homer's poetry, Pope's style has a certain appropriateness. It is in the level passages of narrative and description, where the simple material will not take the polish of brilliant diction and epigram, that Pope falls lamentably short of his

Pope's Homer.

original. Yet with all deductions, his Homer is an amazing performance, perhaps the most complete translation, or rather adaptation, in existence; a *tour de force* made possible by the definiteness and precision of eighteenth century art, and by the confidence of the age in its own ideals.

The works of Pope thus far mentioned are chiefly remarkable for their literary qualities; they show him as the master of his form. But even more important is the group of poems in which, with no loss of artistic finish, he dealt directly with the life of his time. Of these *The Rape of the Lock* stands first. The poem was suggested by a trivial occurrence, the rude behavior of Lord Petre in cutting a lock from the head of Miss Fermor. Only the excessive interest of the age in social matters, combined with the sympathetic genius of a poet, could have made such gossip as this outlast the centuries. Pope wrote first a rapid account of the card-party at Hampton at which the theft took place. Later he expanded the poem by introducing the sylphs, who guard the lady's bed, make her toilet, and attend her in public,—admirable suggestions of the artifice which directed each act, however trivial, of a belle of Queen Anne's day. *The Rape of the Lock* is not only a satire on society; it is a witty parody of the heroic style in poetry. Even the verse form is treated humorously, especially through its tendency toward anti-climax, as in the lines,

"The Rape of the Lock."

> Here thou, great Anna! whom three realms obey,
> Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea.

In *The Rape of the Lock* the satire is general, and, on the whole, good-natured. Many of Pope's poems, however, are intensely personal, and grew out of the circumstances of his life. As has been said already, his character was not a great one. We listen in vain in his poetry for the deeper notes of individual human experience. But his lack of absorption in his inner life made him morbidly

sensitive in his superficial contact with the world. It is pathetic to note the minute, intense interest which he took in his trivial existence, in his small loves and hates. No man ever had more elaborate relations with people than Pope, or got more out of his friends, or changed more often from friendship to enmity, or pursued his enemies with more unwearied spite. His biography is largely a record of his personal relations with Wycherley, with Swift, with Addison, with Arbuthnot, and with Bolingbroke; and of his literary enmities with men too numerous and generally too obscure for mention. Two of his old friends, Wycherley and Swift, when both were mentally incapable, he tricked by putting out garbled versions of his correspondence with them. The story of his method of getting these letters before the public without appearing to be responsible for the publication is characteristic of his petty dishonesty, but still more of the attention which he paid to the surface of his life, and the care which he expended in preparing it for the public view.

Pope's Character.

Toward the close of Pope's life his personal interests formed more and more the chief motive of his poetry. The "Moral Epistles," though written ostensibly on general themes like "The Use of Riches," are crowded with particular allusions; and the "Imitations of Horace" are likewise made up of personal contemporary sketches. The "Epistle to Arbuthnot" and the "Epilogue to the Satires" are bundles of posthumous spites. The former contains Pope's revenge for Addison's support of a rival translation of Homer, the venomous lines in which Addison is described as Atticus. But Pope did not attack merely the great ones of the earth. His own literary ventures and his alliance with Swift, Gay, and others, brought him into collision with critics like John Dennis, with Theobald, a rival editor of Shakespeare, with Bentley, who as a Greek scholar spoke disrespectfully of Pope's Homer. These and countless other literary and

His Later Satire.

personal grudges Pope paid off by the several publications of *The Dunciad*, an elaborate satire in which, after the fashion of Dryden in *MacFlecknoe*, the dullards, pedants, and bad poets are presented in ridiculous surroundings and attitudes. All this morbid following of "miserable aims that end in self" seems remote enough from the dignity of a great poet. Yet it must not be forgotten that the age itself was largely preoccupied with small things. Pope's satiric genius came to him as of right, at a time when the eyes of men were turned away from the wonders of nature and of the human heart, and were fixed on themselves and their worldly concerns.

One of Pope's last friendships, that with Bolingbroke, proved the inspiration of the best remembered of his poems, the *Essay on Man*. Bolingbroke was the representative of a kind of scepticism, thoroughly characteristic of eighteenth century thought, to which the name Deism has been given. Deism was an effort to substitute natural religion for Christianity. Indeed Pope's "Essay" is in so far anti-Christian, that it finds satisfactory grounds for belief in God by the exercise of reason, unaided by revelation. The poem is in reality an application of common-sense to the problems of the universe and to the life of man; and where common-sense refuses to carry us, "beyond the flaming ramparts of the world," there Pope limits his inquiry. The first epistle is concerned with man's place in nature; the second with individual ethics; the third with the origin of society and politics; the fourth with the question of man's happiness. In all four appear the positivism of the century, its shallow satisfaction with things as they are, its dislike of those speculative differences which lead to fanaticism, its trust in downright utility. In short, the *Essay on Man* is a marvellous collection of aphorisms, pointing neatly and exactly the peculiarities and prejudices of the age of which Pope was so eminently the voice.

The "Essay on Man."

Pope was by personal inclination connected chiefly with the writers who gathered about Swift, and in Swift's absence in Ireland he was the centre of the group. His satellite of chief magnitude was John Gay (1685–1732). Gay, unlike his greater friends, was a thoroughly good-natured, likable man, whose bent was toward broad, genial humor rather than bitter satire. His earliest important poem, *The Shepherd's Week* (1714), was a burlesque treatment of the conventions of pastoral poetry. In *Trivia* (1715) he transferred his talent for humorous observation to the London streets, and this and the *Fables* (1727) show his happy faculty for easy comment and criticism of life. His fame in his own day rested perhaps chiefly upon *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), another burlesque of the pastoral form; but he is remembered now for a lyrical gift, which produced the two famous songs, "'Twas when the seas were roaring," and "Black-eyed Susan."

John Gay.

Pope brought the heroic couplet to perfection, and perhaps for that reason the younger poets, who grew up in the second quarter of the century turned their attention to other forms. Again, Pope's neglect of nature and human passion may have been a cause why men of originality should have entered upon these fields of poetic material. But it must be said further that before the death of Pope the mood of the nation was undergoing a change. The civilizing, critical spirit had done its work; and the age was ready for a freer, more emotional expression. Its interests were broadened. Tired of contemplating man in the narrow sphere marked out by artificial society, and invested with the conventional attributes of town life, poets looked beyond, and saw humanity as it appeared in the country, or in remote parts of the world. They learned to look toward the past with reverence, and with a desire to know it more thoroughly. Nature was noted as the environment of the larger part of humanity, and was then described for its own sake. Indeed, the new attitude

The New Poetry.

toward nature, and the new feeling for the past, became the leading signs of the romantic movement, of which the pioneers were Thomson, Young, Collins, and Gray (see page 257). It must not be thought, however, that the new school gained at once and unopposed a position of authority. On the contrary, it made its way slowly, against a vigorous reaction led by Samuel Johnson. In the third quarter of the century, Johnson succeeded to that primacy in English literature which had earlier belonged to Dryden and to Pope; but it is significant of the inroads which the romantic revival was making into the received traditions of eighteenth century criticism, that, though Johnson was of a more absolute temper than either of his predecessors, his sway was never so complete as theirs.

Johnson's life is typical of the social conditions under which literature was practised in the second period of the century. By his time literature had lost its political support, and was obliged to rely entirely upon the public. And the reading public was of slow growth. The writers who depended upon it were compelled to live in a squalid bohemia,—not unlike that inhabited by the popular group of authors in the age of Elizabeth,—and to put forth a mass of bad poetry, criticism, and journalism merely for bread. The name of the street where many of them lived, Grub Street, became a synonym for hack writing and poverty. The aristocratic traditions of the profession were supported by men of the highest reputation, like Pope, who could approach the public directly through the subscription list; but for the ordinary writer there was no resource except servitude to the literary broker or bookseller. Under these hard conditions Johnson and his friends slowly made their way to distinction; from that Grub Street which Pope and Swift had scornfully lampooned, came their successors in power and reputation.

The Social Position of Writers.

Samuel Johnson was born in 1709, the son of a Litch-

field bookseller. He was at Oxford for a time, but his father's failure obliged him to leave the University, and after vainly trying to win his bread as a teacher, he tramped to London. Here he lived in a state of wretchedness which is reflected in his Life of Savage, a poet who was his companion in Grub Street misery. Often the friends walked the streets from dusk to dawn for want of mere shelter. One resource was, indeed, open to them. Following the success of *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, had come the periodical magazine of miscellaneous literature, of which the *Gentleman's Magazine* (1731) and the *London Magazine* were the first. For some years Johnson wrote for the *Gentleman's Magazine* reports of the debates in Parliament. His first poem, "London" (1738), gave him some reputation, which was increased by "The Vanity of Human Wishes" (1749), and by his drama *Irene*, a stiff classical tragedy, which was staged by the good-nature of his friend and former pupil David Garrick. He wrote also essays after *The Spectator* model, called *The Rambler* (1750–1752). But his pre-eminent position came to him after the publication of his *Dictionary of the English Language*, in 1755. When he had announced this work seven years before, Johnson had sought the support and patronage of Lord Chesterfield, but the latter had been contemptuously cold toward the project. When the work was about to appear, however, the nobleman let it be known that he would accept and reward the dedication of the work to himself; but it was Johnson's turn, and in his famous letter to Chesterfield he wrote for English literature its final declaration of independence from the institution of patronage.

Samuel Johnson.

His Later Life.

The Dictionary made Johnson's fame and state secure. In 1764 he formed with Burke, Goldsmith, Gibbon, and others, the famous Literary Club, as chief member of which he held the unquestioned headship of contemporary letters in England. Still, Johnson was poor; and to the end of

his life he was forced to labor to support himself and the various persons who fell dependent upon him. When his mother died, in 1759, he wrote his oriental apologue, *Rasselas,* in a week, to pay for the funeral. He wrote other series of essays, *The Adventurer,* and *The Idler.* He edited Shakespeare. He undertook the preparation of a series of lives of the English poets, which appeared between 1779 and 1781. He died in 1784.

Johnson's Classicism.

Both in his original writing and in his criticism upon the writings of others, Johnson emphasizes the classical dependence upon accepted models and attained results, as opposed to romantic experiment and aspiration. In his poetry he followed Pope's use of the heroic couplet. Like Pope, also, he modelled his poems on the works of Latin writers; his "London," for example, being a general attack upon the evils of society, in close imitation of Juvenal. His sympathy with classical ideals led him to conform his play, *Irene,* to the unities. In his prose, he continued the work of Dryden and Addison. His two most important prose works, his Introduction to Shakespeare and his *Lives of the Poets,* illustrate the point of view in matters of art which Dryden had confirmed and established; and his essays, published under the titles of *The Rambler* and *The Idler,* are modelled upon the form set by *The Tatler,* though Johnson's essays are longer, heavier, and duller than Addison's. His moral tone, too, is more serious; for he looked at morality from the point of view of character, rather than from that of civilization. His essays on the Necessity of Punctuality, on Idleness, on The Luxury of a Vain Imagination, are serious, though somewhat commonplace studies in the conduct of life. Indeed, the seriousness of Johnson's moral tone is everywhere pronounced; and in this respect, too, he is a genuine representative of the classic era, in its worthier aspects. His "Vanity of Human Wishes" is written in a lofty strain of moral elevation. He accepted

without question the classical fiction that works of art should somehow do good to people; even his *Lives of the Poets* he hopes are "written in such a manner as may tend to the promotion of piety."

His Reaction against Classical Tradition.

But although, in these particulars, Johnson illustrates the formally accepted point of view of the classical age, there are many signs in him of an individual reaction against it. It is true, he was a classicist in his fondness for the admitted, the regular, and in his dislike of the unusual; in his insistence upon the universal in taste, as opposed to the individual. But at the same time his sensible, reality-loving habit of mind led him to hit a sham when he saw it, even such a venerable and reverenced sham as the unities of dramatic action. In spite of his own conformity to classical requirement in *Irene*, he boldly points out, in his criticism of Shakespeare, that the acceptance of any theatrical production as real, involves such concessions from the imagination of the audience that it is not in common-sense to refuse license in minor matters. His attitude on this and other points serves to illustrate the reason of the eighteenth century at war with the principles of art which had been long assumed to be the highest expression of that reason. His position in the world of letters strikingly illustrates the approaching end of the era which had begun with the Restoration. His real sense of the values of things, and his freedom from cant, tended to shake his faith in pseudo-classical formulæ; and his personal force, his independence of character, his very prejudices, made broadly in the direction of individualism as against authority in criticism, and thus prepared the way for the romantic reaction.

His Style.

The Rambler essays show, perhaps more saliently than any other of Johnson's writings, those peculiarities which have made his style a by-word for heaviness. The diction involves a large proportion of Latin words, due, as has been humorously sug-

gested, to the fact that Johnson was then at work on his lexicon, and used his *Rambler* as a track where he could exercise the words that had grown stiff from long disuse. Moreover Johnson doubles epithets, adds illustrations, develops, expands, modifies, balances, repeats, and exhausts the idea before he will have done with it. His sentences are thus complicated and weighty, full of inversions, depending much on rhetorical artifices such as antithesis and climax. But this elaborate manner is not always out of place. It occasionally gives to Johnson's writing a sombre and splendid eloquence, as in the opening passage of *Rasselas*. Moreover, he could be simple and colloquial when he chose; and his later works, possibly because they were written more hurriedly, are much more terse and rapid. In general, Johnson's influence on English style was a good one. While he confirmed the tradition of order, correctness, and lucidity, which had begun with Dryden, he introduced a greater variety of effect, a more complex sentence structure, and a more copious diction. He showed how, even within the rules of composition defined in practice by Dryden and Addison, the richness and variety of Elizabethan prose might be attempted.

Johnson had in him a force of character far greater than he succeeded in bringing to bear on any of his literary undertakings. This force of character strongly impressed his contemporaries, and has been transmitted to later times by the extraordinary zeal and ability of the greatest of all biographers, James Boswell, whose *Life of Johnson* is one of the classics of the century. It begins properly with the year 1763, when its author first met Johnson. From that meeting Boswell followed the great man's doings and sayings with unwearied attention. In his effort to draw Johnson out and to make him expressive, he was deterred by no rebuffs, and he was not ashamed to offer himself as the butt of his master's wit. For twenty years he worked with his ey

Boswell's "Life of Johnson."

constantly upon his subject, and was then prepared, with the same cheerful sacrifice of his own dignity, to write the biography which still keeps Johnson in the place which he won, that of the most salient figure of his epoch. Of no man in the past is our perception so extraordinarily keen and first-hand. His bulky, awkward appearance, his brusque, overbearing manner, his portentous voice, his uncouth gestures and attitudes, his habits of whistling or "clucking like a hen" in the intervals of speaking, and of "blowing out his breath like a whale" when he had finished,—all these have come down to us, together with the record of a great mass of his conversation. It is in this last that Johnson's power and Boswell's skill are most strikingly manifested. Johnson wrote much, but nearly always under the spur of necessity; he talked spontaneously. His reputation, indeed, rests largely upon such sayings as "Being in a ship is like being in gaol with the chance of drowning," or "A woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all." In such scraps of homely comment the practical sense of the age expressed itself as vividly and rememberably as in Pope's couplets.

To Boswell's "Life," then, Johnson owes his latter-day reputation as an eccentric, and as a sayer of good things. But there is another Johnson whom Boswell knew without comprehending,—the stricken, hopeless, much-enduring, brave, pious soul, who exemplifies so much of what is wholly admirable in human nature. For Johnson suffered grievously in life; and as he grew older his philosophy came to be a serious and considered pessimism. In *Rasselas* he deals honestly with the question of human happiness; and he finds that life is almost barren of joy, that escape from pain is the highest felicity. He made no attempt to blink the facts of existence; he had no imaginative coloring to give them; and yet he faced life always with energy and

courage. In spite of everything, in spite even of weakness in his own character, he believed in himself. In his strenuousness, his morality, his refusal to yield ground anywhere to the evils without or the foes within, in his resolve to draw inspiration from his own shortcomings, in all this Johnson is a great man, and for this he deserves his fame.

Johnson's so-called dictatorship of English letters was largely the result of his conversational supremacy in the Literary Club, which included nearly all the famous writers of the time. Next to Johnson himself its most notable figure was Oliver Goldsmith. Goldsmith was born in 1728 in Ireland, where his father had a small living. He was a dull boy at school, and had an undistinguished career at the University of Dublin. He then went to Edinburgh to study medicine, and afterward to Leyden; whence he begged his way over a large part of Europe, returning to London in 1756. After an unsuccessful attempt as a school-master, he took to literature as it was practised in Grub Street, and became a hack writer for various magazines. His papers called *The Citizen of the World* (1760–1761) (which he wrote for the "Public Ledger") consisted of observations upon English life written from the point of view of a Chinaman. In 1764 Johnson found him one day in his lodgings, the prisoner of his unpaid landlady, with the manuscript of *The Vicar of Wakefield* by him. Johnson sold the book, which appeared some fifteen months later, after Goldsmith had published his first successful poem, *The Traveller*. His second venture into poetry, *The Deserted Village*, appeared in 1770. Meanwhile Goldsmith had turned to the stage, producing *The Good-natured Man* in 1768, and *She Stoops to Conquer* in 1773, the year before his death.

Oliver Goldsmith.

Goldsmith is almost as well known to us as Johnson, and largely through the same agency, the industry of Boswell. He is portrayed in the *Life of Johnson* as the second luminary of the club, the only member who dared persistently

to provoke the wrath of the dictator. Again and again Boswell shows us Johnson and Goldsmith, the heavily armed soldier and the deft slinger. Occasionally Johnson bore down his opponent by sheer weight, but more often Goldsmith sent his stone to its mark and made good his retreat. Sometimes his success turned on a mere trick; but often his replies were compact of sense and salt, as when he doubted Johnson's ability to write a fable because he would inevitably make the little fishes talk like whales. Goldsmith's wariness in conversation did not accompany him into the more practical walks of life. He was invariably in difficulties, pecuniary or social; partly through his generosity, in which he resembled his own Good-natured Man, partly through his blind trust in the world. For Goldsmith was, in one sense at least, the antithesis of Swift. He gave himself freely; he threw himself upon life with the naïve imprudence of a child. Whether traversing Europe as a penniless student, or selling his master-pieces, Goldsmith took no thought for the morrow. And with this confidence in his fellows went a great love for them, a love apparent in all the writings into which he put his real self. His papers in *The Citizen of the World,* though, like Addison's, often directed against the faults and absurdities of men, have a tenderness which goes beyond Addison's mildness, a note of kinship that is very different from the Spectator's aloofness. Goldsmith's poems are written in the metre of Pope, but in spirit they are far removed from Pope's satirical hardness. In place of the savage sketches of Atticus and Bufo in *The Epistle to Arbuthnot,* we have the village parson in *The Deserted Village.* And it is to be noted that, though Goldsmith had no personal sympathy with the rising romantic school, his interest in remote, obscure, and unfortunate phases of human life, which appears in *The Traveller,* his championship of the individual against the institution which would crush him, in

Goldsmith's Character.

The Deserted Village, mark him as a precursor of the romantic movement.

A criticism that has often been made on Goldsmith's *Deserted Village,* is that the picture of Auburn in its prosperity could never apply to an Irish hamlet. The same criticism might be applied more broadly to all his work. To him realism was impossible, because in his whole experience of life he invariably read the world in terms of his own idealism. This idealism gives its coloring to his novel, and also to his comedies. *She Stoops to Conquer,* the best known of them, presents us, soon after the opening of the play, with a riotous scene at the "Three Pigeons," led by the loutish squire, Tony Lumpkin. Two travellers appear, whom Tony directs to the house of his step-father, Mr. Hardcastle, as to an inn. The travellers are young Marlow, whom Hardcastle is expecting as the suitor for his daughter, and his friend Hastings. Hardcastle recognizes them; but Marlow, and Hastings also for a time, believe themselves to be in a hostelry, think Hardcastle is the host and his daughter the servant, and behave accordingly. The situation, however, favors the love affair between Miss Hardcastle and Marlow; for the latter, who has never been able to conquer his bashfulness with ladies of condition, finds his path easy with the supposed barmaid.

"She Stoops to Conquer."

The play is a charming idyl, in which the rough edges of the world are ground smooth, in which faults turn out to be virtues, and mistakes to be blessings. At times the stage-land copies the actual world with fidelity, as in the scene at the "Three Pigeons," and in the simple country life in Hardcastle's home. Tony Lumpkin is a genuine child of the soil. But the magic of comedy is over all, a magic indeed much subdued from the brilliant romanticism of Shakespeare's day, but still potent. For the sober theatre of the late eighteenth century, *She Stoops to Conquer* is a

kind of prose *Tempest*, the most victorious assertion in its age, of the mood of the idyl.

Goldsmith's plays are a reflection of the idealism which was beginning to manifest itself in the realistic age. Opposed to him is Richard Brinsley Sheridan, (1751–1816), whose dramas are written in the mood of satirical observation of the surface of life, which the eighteenth century novel expressed, from Fielding to Miss Burney. Sheridan was born at Dublin, of English-Irish stock. After a romantic runaway marriage he settled in London; and when only twenty-three he produced *The Rivals* (1775). In 1777, after his assumption of the directorship of Drury Lane Theatre, he put on his best play, *The School for Scandal*, and in 1779 *The Critic*.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

In *The Rivals* we have the immortal Mrs. Malaprop; her niece, Lydia Languish, the romantic heroine; and Lydia's lovers, Bob Acres, Sir Lucius O'Trigger, and Captain Absolute, the last masquerading under the name Beverley. Absolute thinks at first that he is loving in opposition to his father's will, and when he finds that Lydia is the very bride picked out for him, he continues to maintain with her his character of Beverley, as an appeal to her romantic spirit. The plot involves some absurdities, but it is fertile in amusing situations, and the play abounds in clever dialogue.

"The Rivals."

The School for Scandal opens in the eighteenth century world of fashion, which, in its frivolous artificiality, lent itself readily to the purposes of the comedian. In this corrupt society Lady Teazle has, for form's sake, provided herself with a lover, Joseph Surface. Meanwhile Joseph, a cold-hearted hypocrite, has plans of his own; one of which is to marry Sir Peter Teazle's niece Maria, and another to supplant his own brother Charles, a good-natured spendthrift, in their uncle's affection. The uncle, Sir Oliver, returns from India, introduces himself, as a money-lender, to Charles, whom he finds ready to sell

"The School for Scandal."

even his family portraits, except that of Sir Oliver himself. This modest bit of loyalty serves to reinstate the prodigal in his uncle's good opinion; while Joseph, discovered on all sides, fades out of the play in disgrace.

It is evident that here we have an amusing mock world, where the principles, moral and social, on which human life is actually conducted, are subordinated to the necessities of an intrigue. The characters bear an amazing similitude to real people; indeed, many of them have long been accepted as exact delineations of certain qualities and types; but we never forget while we are with them that we are in stage-land. At first sight, *The School for Scandal*, with its opening scenes in which gossip runs wild, seems to revive the world of the Restoration drama, but there is a difference. Light, trifling, frivolous as is Sheridan's society, it is not fundamentally and flagrantly immoral. His people play with fire, but they are not burned. So much had the moral and social force of the century accomplished, in the years since Collier's attack on the stage.

It may have been owing to the development of the magazine that the work of the men of Johnson's period was in general of so miscellaneous a character. From this charge, however, must be excepted Edward Gibbon (1737–1794), who is known for a single work, perhaps the most splendid literary achievement of the century. From his youth Gibbon believed in his destiny as a historian; and like Milton, he sought long for a subject worthy of his powers. At last, while on a visit to Rome in 1764, the idea of writing a history of the decline and fall of the empire came to his mind. Four years later he began to work at this subject. In 1776 his first volume appeared, but it was not until after eleven years more of steady toil that the full six volumes were completed.

Edward Gibbon.

Gibbon is personally well known to us through his frank account of himself in his memoirs—a man with little dignity, or presence, or passion, or heroism. Yet in the

light of his achievement, his life stands out in almost heroic proportions. To his great task everything in his career was subsidiary. He served for a time in the militia, and he remarks that the captain of the Hampshire Grenadiers was not useless to the historian of the Roman Empire. In like manner, he made his seat in Parliament merely a preparation for his work, "a school of civil prudence, the first and most essential virtue of an historian." It is this sureness of inspiration, this unity of accomplishment in Gibbon's life, that constitute his claim to something more than the glory that belongs to literary success. In the light of his task his negative qualities become positive; his vices, virtues. As an adaptation of means to end, Gibbon's life was a splendid performance.

His Life and Work.

The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire treats the history of Rome from the second century to the end of the fifth, and then, with a more rapid method, follows the Eastern or Byzantine Empire until the fall of Constantinople. Of Gibbon's scholarship there can be no complaint. He was completely master of his authorities; and his treatment of them is so discriminating, so fair, so thorough, that he cannot be superseded. Two serious faults in his work must be laid at the door of his century—his lack of philosophic insight, and his lack of sympathy with spiritual movements. Like his contemporaries, he distrusted philosophy, and disliked enthusiasm. Behind the facts, he did not care to penetrate; in the realm of emotion he was uncomprehending. Hence his dry, hard, inadequate treatment of Christianity; a treatment reflecting his own attitude and limitations. He had no spiritual interests; his point of view was consistently worldly.

His Merits and Defects.

Gibbon's style is of the elaborate type introduced by Johnson. It is massive, solid, and exhaustive. It substitutes courtliness for ease, elegance for charm. Its excessive

polish gives an effect of insincerity, at times almost of mockery. But, in the large, the effect of Gibbon's style is commensurate with the greatness of his theme. The rhythmic, unwearied march of the sentences, the flashing of antithesis, and the steady roll of the diction, are but pomp and circumstance befitting the stately procession of emperors and nations. Chief among Gibbon's literary qualities is his sense of structure, which shows itself in his faculty for handling large masses of material. He consciously composed by paragraphs, each one a unit, and each of just the right weight. "It has always been my practice," he wrote, "to cast a long paragraph in a single mould, to try it by my ear, to deposit it in my memory, but to suspend the action of my pen till I had given the last polish to my work." This sense of exact structure, of outline, of organic development, shows itself still more in the astonishing architectural merit of the whole work. The ruin of the Roman Empire is in political history what the fall of man is in theology, and Gibbon, like Milton, has realized the epic possibilities of his theme.

His Style.

If Gibbon is a monumental example of a small personality becoming by training and economy fit for the greatest achievement, a corresponding case of a great man expending his powers with apparent fruitlessness, because expending them on passing affairs, is found in the career of Edmund Burke (1729–1797). Goldsmith's epigram—

> "Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,
> And to party gave up what was meant for mankind,"

expressed the opinion of contemporaries as to Burke's career. Yet so penetrating was Burke's thought, and so noble its presentation, that his results are of value to-day, irrespective of the occasions which called them forth.

Burke was a native of Ireland, and a Bachelor of Arts of Trinity College. He went to London as a student of law,

but soon turned aside into literature. His first works were an ironical reply to Bolingbroke, called "A Vindication of Natural Society," and an "Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas on the Sublime and the Beautiful" (1756). In 1761 he entered politics as secretary of the Lord Deputy of Ireland; and later he became secretary to the Marquis of Rockingham, and member of Parliament. Although he never held high office, he was for years the brain of the Whig Party in its effort to limit the exercise of the royal prerogative, which George III., with the assistance of the Tory party, was determined to extend. This was indeed the old question which went back to the time of the Plantagenets; but there were involved in it new problems, arising from the growth of England as a colonial power both in America and in India. It is Burke's peculiar distinction that he saw the dangers gathering over England from all quarters, and strove to avert them. He pointed out the one way of escape in the American situation. His speech on American taxation was delivered in 1774; his great speech on Conciliation with America in 1775. When England emerged from the war against the coalition of European powers, with the loss indeed of America, but with victory in other quarters, Burke instantly began to press his inquiry into the circumstances of that triumph. The chief success of England had been in India, and the man who had won it was Warren Hastings. Against him Burke levelled his attack. Instead of thanking God that things had turned out so well, he asked why they had turned out well, on what principles the Indian Empire had been conquered and administered, and whether those principles were founded upon justice and humanity. In 1785 he delivered his great arraignment of English methods in India, in his speech on "The Nabob of Arcot's Debts;" and the following year he moved the impeachment of Warren Hastings. Two years later he opened the case

Edmund Burke.

His Views on America and India.

before the House of Lords, and he continued to manage it until the acquittal of Hastings in 1795.

Finally, when the dangers which Burke had apprehended from the internal state of England were realized in France, he threw himself toward the only safety which he could see, and led the opposition to the French Revolution. This attitude involved a separation from his party, but Burke took the step without flinching. His "Reflections on the French Revolution," published in 1790, did much to check the rising sympathy with the movement, in England and on the continent. He followed this up with "Thoughts on French Affairs" (1791), "Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs" (1792), and "Letters on a Regicide Peace" (1796–1797). In this opposition Burke took a larger point of view than that of mere insular prejudice. He believed that England had a world mission, in stemming the tide of revolution, and in marshalling the forces of reaction in Europe. Right or wrong, the struggle of England against France between 1794 and 1815 is a splendid act in the drama of nations. It is scarcely too much to say that the leading rôle which England played in those years was cast for her by Burke. He wrote the lines which the cannon declaimed at Trafalgar and Waterloo.

His Views on the French Revolution.

There are thus three periods in Burke's career, in which his writings concerned successively America, India, and France: a first period of Cassandra-prophecy, of unheeded warnings, and despised advice; a second of vigorous pursuit of evil, and vindication of justice; a third of desperate defence of the things he believed in, against the revolution. In his first task he was almost utterly unsuccessful; in the second he won a qualified success amid apparent failure; in the third he was immensely victorious. In the first two, Burke was distinctly ahead of his age; in the last he was behind it. Nevertheless Burke's reactionary tendencies were the result of his character, and rested on the same

practical philosophy that guided his thought in other matters.

For Burke was in character essentially moderate, conservative, and practical. His disposition was always to work with the materials which existed. He was opposed to doctrinaire theories, and to schemes of doubtful applicability. The French Revolution was, in one way, a manifestation of the rationalism of the eighteenth century; of the tendency to try all things in society by reason alone, and to work out by experiments in government the theories which had been expounded by speculative philosophers. The Revolution was conceived in the spirit of Voltaire's belief that "they are the most pestilent of all enemies of mankind who discrown sovereign reason to be the serving drudge of superstition and social usage." To Burke, on the contrary, reason was by no means an adequate measure of humanity. He took account of other elements, even of prejudice, the foe of reason. "Through just prejudice," he says, "a man's duty becomes part of his nature." He held that social usage, that superstition even, might be a part of the wisdom of the ages. And for that wisdom, expressed in concrete form as institutions, the embodied result of long experience, Burke had immense reverence. He held that if institutions were to change, it must not be by the mere arbitrary promulgation of law. On the contrary he says: "If a great change is to be made in human affairs the minds of men will be fitted to it, the general opinions and feelings will draw that way, every fear, every hope will forward it."

His Political Thought.

This reliance on the ultimate facts of human character, even its prejudices and weaknesses, this trust in life rather than in reason, marks a certain connection between Burke and the romantic school in literature. Still more is this connection emphasized by the imaginative power of Burke's sympathy; a sympathy which penetrated to the uttermost

parts of the earth, making the wrongs of the American colonists and the sufferings of the Hindus as real to him as the conditions under which he himself lived. Another point of contact between Burke and the romanticists is his power of investing with interest and color the past experience of the race, and of making it appeal to the imagination. In short, Burke, like Scott and Wordsworth, was a romanticist in feeling, though often reactionary in faith.

His Connection with the Romanticists.

It is the feeling behind his thought that gives to Burke's style its curious, far-reaching eloquence. His substance is solid, massive, full of fact, apparently most refractory and inert; yet it is constantly brought to a white heat by the flame of his passion. No such style as his had been seen in England. He formed it indeed on the model of Bolingbroke, but he has a range of effects to which his master was a stranger,—splendid imagery, irony, fervor, conviction; while in such technical matters as the articulation of his sentences, and the direction of his paragraphs, Burke measured for the first time the rhetorical possibilities of English writing.

His Style.

With Burke the eighteenth century properly ends. He is the last of the group of great writers whose chief interest was in politics, and whose trust was in institutions. He died while defending, with apparent success, the work of the century against what seemed to him the forces of destruction. But although he uttered the formal doctrine of the eighteenth century, in his deeper thought he represents that spiritual gain with which humanity advanced into the nineteenth.

CHAPTER XI

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: THE NOVEL

As the drama was the characteristic and natural literary expression of the Elizabethan age, so the novel has been the prevailing type of popular literature in the last two centuries. For this change there have been assigned various reasons. In the first place, it is clear that the dramatist works within limitations. He must put his material before the public in a few hours and on a small stage. He must make his personages tell their story, and reveal their characters, without appearing in his own person. The novelist, on the contrary, is practically unlimited in time, space, or method. He can assume omniscience in the conduct of his story, revealing his characters by selections from their acts, speeches, and thoughts; even from the life which lies beneath their conscious thought. And above all, he can give his attitude toward life in his own authoritative interpretation of the meaning of the events which he narrates. Naturally, therefore, the novel lends itself more easily to the treatment of the great mass of interests and problems which make up modern life. Moreover, it is to be noted that the drama depends, to some extent at least, on the theatre. The English reading public in these latter days has become so extensive and so scattered, that it has far outgrown the possibility of being served by such an institution as the theatre of Shakespeare's time, or even, let us say, as the French stage of to-day. Thus to the general causes for the predominance of the novel in the modern world, must be added this physical reason, which applies with peculiar force to English literature.

The Novel and the Drama.

To give a complete account of the modern novel we must go back to the stories of the Middle Ages. These were in general of two kinds, adapted to two audiences, the nobles and the people. Of the first class were the romances clustering about such heroes as Charlemagne and King Arthur, and dealing with knightly adventure, mystical religious experience, and courtly love. These were told first in verse, later in prose. The *Morte d'Arthur* of Sir Thomas Malory (1470) is the most comprehensive example of the knightly epic in England. Being written for people of leisure and culture, the romances of chivalry presented a highly imaginative, idealized view of life, in which strength, virtue, and passion were all of a transcendent and unnatural character. The fiction of the common people was decidedly more realistic. For them, the stories of the knightly epics were in part retold, often with the purpose of exhibiting in a cynical spirit the coarse human motives underlying chivalric achievement. Sometimes the vices and follies of men were represented in short tales, in prose or verse; the hypocrisy of the clergy, for example, was a favorite subject. An idea of the range of mediæval popular fiction can be gained from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales,* or from the collection of stories made by Boccaccio in the *Decameron.* These prose stories were called in Italy *novelle,* from which term is derived our word *novel.* The spirit of burlesque aroused by the contrast between the ideals of chivalry and the affairs of actual life, led in Spain to the production of a form of story known as the picaresque romance. Here the hero is a rascal (*picaro*=rogue) who wanders from place to place, finding all manner of adventures, amusing and scandalous; he is not, like the knight-errant, bent upon finding the Holy Grail or upon rescuing injured princesses, but is intent merely upon satisfying his bodily wants. The typical Italian *novella* and the Spanish rogue story resembled each other in their realism, in the faithfulness with which they reproduced the

Mediæval Fiction.

manners of actual life. They are the source of the realistic novel of to-day, while what we call the *romance* looks back rather to the epic of chivalry for its beginning.

English fiction of the Renaissance was largely derived from the sources just mentioned. There were great numbers of translations of the Italian *novelle* and some translations of the Spanish rogue stories. There were prose romances founded on the careers of popular heroes, and told sometimes in the idealistic, often in the popular spirit. The first great landmarks in English fiction of the Renaissance were Lyly's *Euphues,* an example of a fictitious narrative with a purpose, and Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia,* in which a romance of chivalry is given a pastoral setting. In the light of Lyly's and Sidney's success, many stories, often from Italian sources, were retold in the Euphuistic manner, or with the addition of Arcadian elements; of these Robert Greene's *Menaphon,* and Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde* have already been mentioned. An excellent example of an original rogue story is Thomas Nash's *Unfortunate Traveller.*

English Fiction of the Renaissance.

In the seventeenth century the English readers of fiction were chiefly supplied from France, where there had arisen a school of writers who told at great length, and with much sentimental and imaginative embroidery, the stories of the Grand Cyrus and other half-historical heroes. Of these tales the best known are those by Mlle. Scudéry. In their exaggeration of heroism and in their artificiality they resembled the romances of chivalry which they succeeded, and like them they appealed especially to the aristocracy, both in France and in England. Among the people, the chief interest in the seventeenth century was the religious one; naturally, therefore, we find popular fiction of the period represented by the adaptation of the common type of story to the religious life. Bunyan's Pilgrim wanders through the world like the knight-errant or the Spanish rogue, meeting advent-

English Fiction in the Seventeenth Century.

ures. Like the knight he has a high purpose; like the rogue he mingles with people of every sort, and reflects in his journey the common sights and interests of English country life. Almost as notable a contribution to the development of modern fiction as *The Pilgrim's Progress,* is Bunyan's autobiography, *Grace Abounding.* One of the chief elements of the novel is the study of character, and in this study the novelist has often found his most genuine material in the literature of confessions; among such examples of personal analysis and recorded spiritual experience, Bunyan's account is one of the most naïvely convincing and powerfully rendered.

The real beginning of the English novel took place in the eighteenth century, with the work of Daniel Defoe (1661–1731). Defoe, like Bunyan, was a Dissenter, a thorough man of the people, a stranger to the ideals and refinements of aristocratic life. Moreover, in an age when the aim of the successful writer was to rise in the world, and to gain aristocratic connections, Defoe seems to have been entirely willing to remain in his class, to serve it, and to write for it. He began life as a tradesman, but soon interested himself in politics, and held various offices under William III. In the early years of Queen Anne's reign he turned the arms of the Tories, who were in favor of a mild persecution of Dissenters, against themselves, by publishing a pamphlet *The Shortest Way with Dissenters,* in which he ironically advised the severest punishments for religious nonconformity. With an art which he showed later in his novels, he concealed his real personality, and his work passed as that of a genuine Tory. The trick was discovered, however, and Defoe was punished by being placed in the pillory and imprisoned for some years. While in prison he edited *The Review,* one of the first English newspapers. He was released to enter the service of the government as a secret agent, perhaps as a spy, which office he held under different ministries

Daniel Defoe.

almost to the end of his life. He continued to write for newspapers, and as a clever journalist he published the lives of various people of interest to the public: of Peter the Great for one; of Jonathan Wild, a notorious criminal and thief-taker, for another; of Captain Avery, a notable pirate, for a third. His life brought him into contact with all sorts of adventurers; being of a curious disposition and a retentive memory, he heard their stories and afterward wrote them out. When his material failed he drew upon his imagination; but he realized that he was writing for people who demanded fact, who perhaps thought it wrong to read fiction, and accordingly he tried to give every appearance of reality to his narratives.

"The Journal of the Plague Year."

The method by which he worked over from biography and history into fiction, is illustrated by *The Journal of the Plague Year* (1722). In this work much of the material is authentic, gathered doubtless from many sources; but while a historian would have endeavored to base his account directly upon these various authorities, Defoe, as a story teller, presents all his facts as the continuous experience of an imaginary narrator. So cleverly is this done that the personality of this character comes to be the most authoritative thing in the book; we believe in the horrors of the Plague because we believe that the imaginary spectator of them is truthful. In his power thus to produce a perfect illusion of reality, Defoe anticipates the later triumphs of great fiction. Many writers have used pestilence as one of the means for awakening terror in their readers; but Defoe has surpassed them, simply because he seems so earnestly intent on telling the mere truth, with no care for literary effect.

While working on the border line between biography and fiction, Defoe was attracted by the story of a sailor, Alexander Selkirk, who had been wrecked on an island in the Pacific, and had remained there for many years. This

story suggested *The Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe,* which was published in 1719. Here again Defoe shows what a contemporary described as "the little art he is so truly master of, of forging a story and imposing it on the world for truth;" and here also the reason for his success is apparent. Defoe is always minute in his account of events and circumstances, and these circumstances, although not always the most important, are precisely those which the character who is telling the story would be likely to remember. In other words, Defoe is a master of the art of taking and keeping the point of view of his hero. Indeed, he seems to abdicate his rights as an author; to allow his hero to possess him. He throws himself completely into the situation of Crusoe, wrecked on the island. He foresees the dangers incident to such a situation, takes measures of precaution against them, indulges the natural hope of escape, and makes the wonderfully human mistake of building a boat too heavy for him to launch. He is absorbed in the trivial events of a solitary existence; he is filled with satisfaction at his miniature conquest of nature, and with horror at the frightful discovery of the human footprint in the sand. In fact, so utterly does he merge himself in Crusoe that, when his work was finished, he came to see in the struggles of the York mariner an allegory of his own toilsome and dangerous experience of life.

"Robinson Crusoe."

Crusoe proved so successful that Defoe followed it the next year with the *Further Adventures,* and then with the *Serious Reflections of Robinson Crusoe.* In the next few years he also published a series of stories of adventure: *Captain Singleton* (1720), a tale of piracy; *Moll Flanders* (1722), the life of a thief and adventuress; *Colonel Jacque* (1722); and *Roxana* (1724). These stories are all picaresque in matter and in form. The hero, who is the narrator, constitutes the chief element of unity; the other characters appear and pass away, no attempt being

The Minor Novels.

made to work them into a plot. Defoe conceals his personality behind that of his hero, as he had done in the case of Crusoe; yet his personal attitude toward life appears in the purpose which each tale clearly has. Defoe was a Dissenter; he wrote for the descendants of Puritans, men in whom the interest in conduct and morality was strong. It is true, Puritanism, in its descent to the eighteenth century, had lost its ideal character. Defoe's morality is that of the bourgeois. He inculcates the utilitarian virtues; his aim is social usefulness. *Robinson Crusoe* is a manual of the qualities that have won the world from barbarism,—courage, patience, ingenuity. In the minor novels these same practical virtues are exhibited, even in the pursuit of evil ends. But beyond this Defoe has a moral idea to which he makes most of his characters conform, by the repentance in which they end their stories. This side of Defoe's ethics is less sincere than the other, and its appearance is rather an artistic blemish. In the case of Moll Flanders, who has been a great sinner, repentance seems inadequate; in that of poor Crusoe, who has done nothing worse than run away from home, it seems forced. Yet in both cases Defoe bears witness to a prevailing demand for the moralization of literature; a demand made by the English middle class for which he wrote, and of which he so eminently was.

Defoe's Morality.

One element of the modern novel Defoe's stories are without,—they lack plot. Like the Spanish rogue stories, they are merely successions of adventures which befall the same hero. The first great success in constructing a story which should be guided throughout its course by a single motive, the love of one person for another, was *Pamela*, written by a London printer, Samuel Richardson (1689–1761). Richardson was asked by a publisher to write a series of letters which should serve as models for the correspondence of people in the lower walks of life. He did so; and, to add interest to

"Richardson's Pamela."

the letters, he wrote them as the connected letters of a young serving-girl to her parents, telling the story of her temptation by her master, of her resistance, and of her final triumph in marrying him. The book appeared in 1740, and was so popular that Richardson wrote a sequel. The success of *Pamela* encouraged the author to produce a second work of fiction, *Clarissa Harlowe,* which appeared in eight volumes in 1748. This is the story of a young lady, Clarissa Harlowe, who is at the outset the unwilling object of the attentions of a certain Lovelace. A quarrel has occurred between him and Clarissa's brother, and to keep Lovelace from renewing the difficulty she continues to communicate with him. Her relatives, however, persist in distrusting her, and to secure her final separation from Lovelace they introduce a second suitor, an impossible creature named Solmes; and they resort to such measures of persecution to force her to accept him that she finally decides to flee to the protection of a friend. Unfortunately she accepts the assistance of Lovelace, who virtually kidnaps her. After many chapters of suffering she dies, leaving a vast heritage of remorse to be divided among her relatives and Lovelace.

"Clarissa Harlowe."

Like *Pamela, Clarissa* is told by means of letters which pass between the different characters. Obviously, this method is in its nature dramatic; that is to say, the reader holds communication directly with the characters. In other ways it is clear that Richardson thought of the novel as an elaborated drama. He calls *Clarissa Harlowe* "a dramatic narrative;" and he does so very properly, for, as in a play, there is in *Clarissa* a definite catastrophe, every step toward which is carefully prepared for by something in the environment or the characters of the actors. Richardson could not, however, forego entirely the novelist's right to personal communication with his audience. He introduced footnotes in which he

Richardson's Method.

enforced his own view of the story, when he thought his readers likely to go astray. These comments were needed especially in reference to the two principal persons, whose characters show a degree of complexity to which the novel readers of that day were scarcely accustomed. In the case of Clarissa this complexity seems justified; in all her uncertainties, scruples, hesitations, still more in her humiliation and anguish, she appeals to us as a real woman; but Lovelace, though ingenious and consistent, is a machine.

This discrepancy is, after all, natural; for Richardson knew women better than men. As a youth he wrote love letters for girls. As a mature writer he worked in close connection with the female part of his audience. His circle of admirers began with his wife, and a young lady who was staying at his house while he was composing *Pamela*. It widened with his fame, until it included even great ladies of fashion, who in person or by letter communicated with the old printer about the progress of his tales. They petted him, flattered him, and debauched him with tea; until the good Richardson lost himself in the Avalon which they provided, and forgot the world of action outside. So secluded did he become that at last he would communicate even with the foreman of his printing-house only by letter. Because of this seclusion Richardson's novels lack breadth and freshness. They deal with a petty world, a world of trifles and scruples, of Puritan niceties of conscience, of feminine niceties of sentiment and casuistries of deportment.

Richardson's Character.

The seriousness with which Richardson took himself as a novelist appears most markedly in his third novel, *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), which deals with the love affair between the hero and a Miss Harriet Byron. Richardson, like Defoe, was of the middle class, and distinctly wrote for it. Two serious preoccupations of the English middle class at all times, have been deportment and conscience. The first, as we have seen, was a

His Purpose.

social interest of great importance in the early eighteenth century, when England was learning the lesson of civilization. Richardson began his work with the humble design of teaching his readers to write, but his plan broadened until it covered the essentials of the art of living. Pamela lives a model life for servants; Clarissa is perfection in a higher sphere; Sir Charles Grandison is an illustration of the adaptation of aristocratic manners to middle class instincts. But in addition, Richardson's characters are all involved in intricate questions of conscience. Clarissa's course is determined only after elaborate discussion of the right and wrong of each step. In *Grandison*, it is only after the hero has dealt with a succession of difficult circumstances arising from the claims upon him of his friend, his friend's children, his sister, his ward, and his father's mistress, that he yields to his passion for Miss Byron. Richardson surely did not exaggerate when he declared the inculcation of virtue to be his first object.

Henry Fielding.

It was something like disgust for Richardson's moral pretensions that led his contemporary, Henry Fielding, to enter upon his career as a novelist. Fielding was of higher birth than Richardson, his father being a soldier of some renown, and his grandfather the son of a peer; he had, too, a far wider and more varied experience of life. He was born in 1707, was educated at Eton, and afterward went to Leyden to study law. In 1727 he returned to London, where he supported himself for a while by writing plays. Deprived of his profession of playwright by the restrictions of the licensing act of 1737, he betook himself again to the study of law, meanwhile supporting his family by miscellaneous writing. His wife died in 1743, leaving him with two children. He struggled on until life was made somewhat easier for him by his appointment as police magistrate in London, in which office he was highly efficient. In 1754, broken in health, he left England for Portugal; he has left a pathetic account of

this journey in his *Voyage to Lisbon*. He died the same year.

It was while Fielding was earning his bread by various literary ventures that Richardson's *Pamela* appeared. Struck by the sentimentality of the book, its narrow view of life, and the shallowness of its ethics, he began to write a burlesque upon it, in which he subjected Pamela's brother, Joseph Andrews, to the same temptation from his mistress that Pamela suffered from her master. Like Pamela, Joseph resists; but unlike her he is turned out of doors, and is left to make his way back to his home in the country. Fielding soon lost sight of his narrowly satirical purpose in the broader attempt to picture the rough English life of post-roads, inns, and country-houses. He is not careful of the structure of his story. The adventures of Joseph with his companion, Parson Adams, do not all advance the plot; minor characters introduce digressions; and the ending is merely a happy accident. Yet, on the other hand, Fielding writes of real men and women with a precision that comes from direct observation. His pictures are often caricatures—as, for example, Mrs. Towwouse the innkeeper, and Trulliber, the hog-raising parson; but they are caricatures that tell the truth.

Joseph Andrews.

Fielding's next novel, *Jonathan Wild*, was a loose narrative, suggested by the life of the famous rascal whom Defoe had celebrated, and written to burlesque the conception of greatness held by ordinary writers of biography. In his last two stories, however, *Tom Jones* (1749), and *Amelia* (1751), Fielding developed genuine plots. The former opens with the discovery of the hero as a new-born babe in the house of a virtuous gentleman, Mr. Allworthy. Here he grows up with Allworthy's nephew Blifil, who out of jealousy ruins Tom's reputation with his benefactor, and gets him turned out into the world. Meanwhile Tom has fallen in love with the daughter of a neighbor, Miss Sophia Western, who returns his love in spite of

"Tom Jones."

the opposition of her father. Tom travels to London, with many wayside adventures; he passes, not unscathed, through various temptations; and finally, by the discovery of the secret of his birth and the revelation of Blifil's villainy, he is advanced to his happy fortune, the favor of Allworthy and marriage with Sophia.

In all this the chief source of unity is the persistence of the hero through a long train of incidents. It is true, many of these incidents contribute to unravel the complication; and of the many characters whom the hero gathers about him in his progress, he holds a goodly number to the end. Still the book is constructed in the loose epic manner, with little of the dramatic precision of form which appears in *Clarissa*. Moreover, Fielding, in contrast to Richardson, believed that the novelist should hold the freest, most uninterrupted communication with his readers; and accordingly he breaks his narrative by what are, in effect, brief essays, giving his opinions on the conduct both of fiction and of life. With this view of the novel as a literary form, Fielding's successors in England have in the main agreed; and thus it may be said that in structure *Tom Jones*, rather than *Clarissa*, is the typical English novel.

"Amelia." *Amelia* is the story of a good wife, who, in spite of temptation, remains faithful to a good-natured but rather light husband, Captain Booth. The temptation is repeated several times, in almost the same form, in the course of the book. The happy ending, by which it appears that Amelia was really the preferred daughter of her mother, and that she has been kept out of her inheritance by the treachery of her sister, is almost a repetition of the Blifil episode in *Tom Jones*. The famous scenes in which Amelia and her children wait in vain for Booth to come, not only repeat each other, but also bear close resemblance to similar scenes in the Heartfree family in *Jonathan Wild*. Finally, Booth is Tom Jones

grown older but no wiser, and Amelia is only a developed portrait of which Sophia Western is the sketch. In short, *Amelia* shows Fielding's weakness as a novelist. He was not copious in invention either in respect to the outer or the inner life. He was primarily an observer; his great strength is in the Rubens-like fertility with which he peopled his world. He saw men and women from the outside, and he was fascinated by their appearance. For the refinements of the novelist's art, for the problems of motive and influence, he had little use. Motives that were not apparent he was content to leave unrevealed; and he confined himself by preference to the simple, epic manner of telling his story. The forces which guide his characters are, for the most part, natural human needs, for it was these that Fielding knew best. His abounding physical vigor was, in fact, the greatest of his gifts. It furnished him with unusual keenness of sense, and enabled him to apprehend and portray the primary facts of life with extraordinary vividness and frankness.

Fielding's Qualities as a Novelist.

This physical keenness was the source of Fielding's rather coarse realism; a realism that was in thorough keeping with the sense of fact of the age, and which Fielding possessed, as did his contemporaries Swift and Pope, to the exclusion of interest in the spiritual, the unworldly. And with Fielding's realism must be connected his moral indifference, his acceptance of things as they are. Of the smug, prudish morality that the eighteenth century accepted for literary purposes, Fielding would have nothing. He threw it aside, and presented man full length as he found him. Yet though he portrayed men with no reservations, he never forgot that he was one with them. From this inborn sympathy comes his large, tolerant way of looking at things, a view of life that often finds relief in raillery, but never in cynicism. He laughs, but his laughter is never inhuman like Swift's; and

Fielding's Character.

it is always ready to give place to tenderness and pity. For him the tragedy of life lay in the appearance of virtue and innocence in a world of evil, cruelty, and deception. In his presentation of this tragedy Fielding is always direct, sincere, and simple. The scene in which Amelia prepares supper for Booth, and when he does not come puts aside the wine untasted to save a sixpence, while her husband is losing guineas at the gaming-table, is far more moving than are the complicated woes of Clarissa. It is this humanity, the most essential quality of the novelist, that makes Fielding's work permanently engaging and powerful.

It was in human sympathy that Fielding's successor was most notably deficient. Tobias Smollett (1721–1771) was a Scotchman, a physician who failed in his profession on account of his irascible temper, and who accordingly took up the practice of literature. His first novel was *Roderick Random* (1748), a tale of adventure, in which he made use of much of his own experience. He had been surgeon's mate on a man-of-war; accordingly, after describing Roderick's youth in Scotland, he sends him to sea, taking the opportunity to insert some vivid descriptions of naval life. The hero participates in the continental wars of George II., visits Paris, goes to South America, where he discovers a conveniently rich father, and returns to England to marry the waiting heroine, Narcissa.

Smollett's "Roderick Random."

Roderick Random is merely a succession of adventures, related by the hero. Of precisely the same type is Smollett's next novel, *Peregrine Pickle* (1751), except that the author tells the story. His third, *Ferdinand, Count Fathom* (1753), is more elaborate in plot, for there are two heroes, Ferdinand, a type of cruelty and mischief, and Renaldo, a type of colorless respectability. Smollett's last novel, *Humphrey Clinker*, published in 1771, after his death, is in many respects his best. The element of plot is slight, the story being sustained chiefly by the course of

mild adventures attending the journeys of a Welsh family through England and Scotland. These journeys, however, give Smollett an opportunity to describe men and things; and as a contemporary record, and comment on life and manners, the book is of decided interest. Moreover, the temper in which life is presented in *Humphrey Clinker* is less harsh than in the earlier books. In general, however, Smollett lacked humor and geniality. Fun of a ferocious sort, cruel practical jokes, abound among his incidents, making us feel that the spirit which could find pleasure in them must have been a savage one. Furthermore, since such incidents frequently have no connection with the plot, and are introduced for their own sake, they must be set down as gratuitously unpleasant. Smollett's early heroes are cruel and passionate, but otherwise colorless, and always unsympathetic. His heroines are mere dolls. His best characters are his humors, men and women who stand each for a single quality or mannerism, and who respond to every stimulus in precisely the same way, like figures in a comic opera. Among the best of these humors are the characters in *Humphrey Clinker*,—Matthew Bramble, the irascible Welsh misanthropist, his sister Tabitha, Win Jenkins, the maid, who exhausts the possibilities of fun in English misspelling; and the sailor characters, Admiral Trunnion in *Peregrine Pickle*, Bowling and Pipes in *Roderick Random*. Smollett's chief contribution to the novel was his enlargement of its area, and the introduction of at least one special interest, the sea, as furnishing special types of character and incident.

Smollett's Later Novels.

It is possible to classify the novels thus far mentioned according as they advance beyond, or revert to, the simple biographic story, in which the element of unity is the persistence of the hero. We next come to a book in which even this element of structure is lacking, which only by an extension of the term can be called a novel at all. The

first two volumes of *Tristram Shandy* appeared in 1760. The author, a clergyman, Laurence Sterne (1713–1768), began it, as he says, "with no clear idea of what it was to turn out, only a design of shocking people and amusing myself." This ill-regulated book was a product of Sterne's ill-regulated existence. His father was a petty officer in the army, and he himself, born in barracks, spent his sickly youth in moving from one military station to another. He was sent to Cambridge, and thence drifted into the Church, obtaining a small living in Yorkshire, where, he says, "books, fiddling, painting, and shooting were my chief amusements." *Tristram Shandy* made him famous. He was courted and flattered in London, promoted in the Church, and well received at Paris, for *Shandy* was an international success. Meanwhile he continued his book, putting into it material of any sort which he happened to have on hand. His health failing, he spent a year in southern France. Part of the experiences of his journey he turned into the seventh volume of *Shandy*, part he saved for a book of travels called *The Sentimental Journey*, of which two volumes appeared in 1768, just before his death.

Laurence Sterne.

Tristram Shandy is not a novel in the proper sense of the word. Elements of the novel it has, characters and incidents, but these are not bound together into a coherent story. The book is without plan; without beginning, progress, or end. In the fourth volume the hero laments that though he is a year older than when he began to write, he has not got beyond his first day's life. The author shifts arbitrarily from one character to another, begins conversations in the middle, interrupts them with little essays full of odd learning, prepares for stories which are never told and scenes between his characters which are never acted. He introduces a new character, the Widow Wadman, with whom Tristram's Uncle Toby falls in love, by a blank page, on which the reader can write his own

"Tristram Shandy."

description. The style is given over to mannerism, abounds in trick and innuendo, and has none of the formal regularity that had marked written prose since the time of Dryden; but is full of the suggestiveness, the half-lights, of brilliant talk. Like Sterne's life, the book is an exaltation of whim. In his life and in his art he was without any sense of propriety, without respect for the conventions that the eighteenth century was so much interested in establishing. His moral tone is that of the Restoration; his style reminds one of the early seventeenth century. Altogether he represents a reaction from the rigid standards, moral and artistic, of Addison and Richardson.

Writing thus directly from his temperament, at the suggestion of his moods, Sterne is curiously subjective. For example, he treats passion, not because it exists as a cardinal fact of life, but because he can draw from it a stimulus for himself and his readers. His humor, too, arises not from a broad vision of the world as comedy, but from a personal sense of the incongruous suggestions that hang about simple, commonplace, or even tragic circumstances. He sits down to weep beside the poor insane Maria, who stares alternately at him and at her goat. "Do you see any resemblance?" he asks. Again, his pathos is not the sympathy of the strong man who weeps because he must. His tears are not wrung from him by the tragedy of existence; on the contrary, he goes about seeking occasion for feeling. He is thus the chief of sentimentalists, of those who write not to picture the world as it is, but to draw from it suggestions for certain moods and feelings. This attitude of mind, which became for a time a leading fashion in literature, found its model largely in *Tristram Shandy*.

Sterne's Sentimentalism.

But there is a stronger reason than this for Sterne's influence. He has a wonderful power of imparting genuine human quality to his characters, through all the eccentricities of their lives and surroundings. He makes no use

of the ordinary material of the novelist,—of men's desires, passions, political or religious beliefs, social relations, success or failure. His characters live in a world of their own. Tristram's father is absorbed in curious learning and speculation; his Uncle Toby is occupied in acting out, in his garden, with the aid of his servant, Corporal Trim, the battles and sieges that he has seen. And yet these characters live, live by virtue of the most adroit suggestion of humanity, in their speech, their facial expression, their gestures and attitudes. With his usual self-consciousness Sterne calls attention to his method, a method new in eighteenth century literature. "You perceive," he says, "that the drawing of my Uncle Toby's character went on gently all the time—not the great contours of it,—that was impossible—but some familiar strokes and faint designations of it were here and there touched on as we went along, so that you are much better acquainted with my Uncle Toby now than you were before." By this method Sterne gives to his characters an abiding reality and charm. They have, with the characters of Cervantes and Shakespeare, with Quixote and Falstaff, the note of highest artistic distinction. They are among the very few "creations" of literature.

His Humanity.

Sterne's habit of playing directly upon the sensibility of his readers was freely imitated. The most notable instance of such imitation is found in *The Man of Feeling* (1771), by Henry Mackenzie. This book shows also the influence of Sterne's loose structure, though Mackenzie explains the breaks in his story by the theory of a mutilated manuscript. The hero's faculty for finding tragedy in the lot of man, and his morbid emotion over it, connect the book with the "graveyard poetry" of Young and of other precursors of the Romantic Movement.

Mackenzie's "Man of Feeling."

Signs of a possibly conscious reaction toward a more wholesome view of life than Sterne's, are to be found in

a book as famous as *Tristram Shandy,* Oliver Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* (1766). *The Vicar of Wakefield* is a perfect expression of homely English sentiment. That sentiment naturally gathers about the family life. The Vicar and his wife and children are thrown into poverty. Worse misfortune comes in the flight of the elder daughter, Olivia, who is lured away by an unworthy lover; in the burning of their poor house; in the imprisonment of the father for debt. But through all these troubles shines the Vicar's love for his family, and his confidence in life; and at the end his faith in the best of all possible worlds emerges triumphant. The Vicar is, it is true, the only character in the book. The Vicar's wife and children; young Squire Thornhill, and his uncle Sir William Thornhill, who wanders through the book in an impossible incognito; the convenient Jenkinson, who has craftily made of Olivia's mock marriage a real one;—all these are shadowy forms of which we get but glimpses as they cross the light of the Vicar's steady personality. The Vicar animates not only the characters, but the spirit and purpose of the book. Goldsmith is not a realist. To him, as to Sterne, the positivism of the early century, with its demand for the presentation of life as it is, made no appeal. His world is an ideal one. Troubles and disasters accumulate like threatening clouds, but only to resolve themselves into beneficent showers. Suffering is not a problem; it is merely an artistic device to make the world seem more beautiful. Evil loses its essential quality; Olivia is married to a rake who does not love her, but even this we accept confidently as a part of the happy outcome, so contagious is Goldsmith's optimism.

Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield."

Goldsmith used one element of the Arcadian romance, and made of it a distinct contribution to the modern novel. The element of outdoor scene had been largely neglected by his predecessors. Richardson had shown care and skill in the arrangement of his interiors;

His Use of Scene.

Fielding had given a few set pieces of description, showing the preference of eighteenth century taste for artificial over natural beauty; but Goldsmith pictured nature with real feeling for it. He made it, especially in the early idyllic scenes of his novel, a happy reinforcement of his theme of domestic bliss and tranquillity; and it is, throughout the book, a symbol of the eternal goodness of the world, another reason for putting trust in life.

With the possible exception of lyric poetry, the novel is the form of literature which has been most successfully practised by women. In the period before Defoe, the most popular writers of romance were women, Mrs. Behn and Mrs. Manley. Miss Sarah Fielding, sister of the novelist, wrote a story, *David Simple*, which both Richardson and Fielding praised. Later in the century the line of realists, broken by Sterne and Goldsmith, was continued by Miss Fanny Burney (1752–1840), whose first story, *Evelina*, appeared in 1778. Dr. Johnson, who was her father's friend, liked the book, and his support had much to do with its immediate success, though his influence on the style of her later books cannot be called happy. With an achieved literary reputation, Miss Burney, who had been glad to get twenty pounds for *Evelina*, sold her second book, *Cecilia*, for two thousand. Soon after this she became a maid of honor to Queen Charlotte; and after escaping from the intolerable constraints of this situation she married General D'Arblay, by whose name she is usually known. At long intervals she followed her early works with two others, which are now forgotten.

Miss Burney.

Evelina is the story of a young girl's introduction to the great world, told chiefly by herself in letters to her guardian. Her path is beset by rival suitors, and made doubtful by a mystery about her own birth; but her course is guided steadily by conscience and propriety. Indeed, both Evelina and Cecilia are of the family of Clarissa: both are a bit prudish, over-scrupulous, over-

Her Novels.

sensitive. The other characters are men and women drawn from nature, as Macaulay says, but not from life, each being developed in accordance with a single dominant passion or peculiarity. Like her model, Richardson, Miss Burney wrote to correct the evils of the time. Her minor characters were intended to make various faults and affectations contemptible or ridiculous, through an extravagant presentation of them. But as the element of truth is largely present in successful satire, it follows that Miss Burney's novels give us fair pictures of the age in which she lived. In *Evelina* we see reflected the uncouthness of the middle classes, the boorishness of their amusements, and their fondness for practical jokes; and in *Cecilia* the studies of contemporary life are still more detailed. Altogether Miss Burney's work will live, if not by its intrinsic interest, at least as a document of importance in the social history of England.

The novel of the eighteenth century from Defoe to Miss Burney, was, on the whole, conceived on lines which made it acceptable to the positive, matter-of-fact temperament of the age. The novelists endeavored to deal with things as they were, though they usually claimed the privilege of making them somewhat better. Toward the close of the century, however, the novel felt the stimulus of a new spiritual force, the Romantic Movement. This movement, treated at length in the next chapter, may be briefly described as a reawakening of the imagination; a revival of pleasure in the emotions of fear, wonder, and mystery, which the sceptical spirit had banished. The new emotional life led men away from the narrow walks of society to nature, and to the mediæval past. With the return to nature came also a feeling for the individual apart from his place in society, and a demand for his free development in spite of laws and conventions. These new motives were faithfully reflected in the fiction of the period. In addition to the realistic novel,

The Romantic Movement.

which dealt with social life and manners, there appeared the romance, which represented the purely emotional interest in nature and in the past, and the humanitarian novel, which seriously undertook to right the wrongs sustained by the individual at the hands of society. These three schools, the realists, of whom Miss Austen is the best example, the romancers, of whom Scott became the chief, and the missionaries, of whom Godwin was the most powerful, have continued, with innumerable divergences, until the present time.

The long list of romances of the period begins with *The Castle of Otranto,* published as early as 1764. It was the work of Horace Walpole (1717–1797), one of the leaders of that fashion which, in its preference for the grotesque and barbarous instead of the classically simple and civilized, was called "gothic." In *The Castle of Otranto* he tried to paint the domestic life and manners of the feudal period, "as agitated by the action of supernatural machinery such as the superstition of the time might have accepted." With this excuse for the introduction of supernatural elements, no explanation of them by rational causes is needed, and none is attempted. A portrait steps from its panel and walks abroad, a statue sheds blood, a helmet of gigantic size crashes down into the courtyard, and gives symbolical accompaniment to the action of the story by dreadfully waving its plumes, all without the least apology from the author. His only effort is to give an air of reality to such impossibilities by making his characters natural, and by painting the manners of the time faithfully. In neither attempt was he highly successful. That he did give his readers a genuine attack of the horrors, however, is proved by excellent testimony, for example, that of his friend Thomas Gray. For the rest, Walpole gave to the gothic romance the elements on which it was to thrive for a generation to come,—a hero sullied by unmentionable crimes, several persecuted heroines, a castle

Walpole's "Castle of Otranto."

with secret passages and haunted rooms, and a plentiful sprinkling of supernatural terrors.

This tale added to the attractions of remote time those of a distant and marvellous land; it substituted for the creations of mediæval superstition the mysteries of oriental necromancy; and it spiced the whole with a dash of Eastern voluptuousness. Another book of importance in the development of the gothic romance, is *The History of the Caliph Vathek* (1784), written by William Beckford. Gothic romances were also produced by Matthew Gregory Lewis, whose *Monk* (1795) was the most popular book of its time, and whose *Bravo of Venice* (1804), has for its hero a distinct precursor of the Byronic type, an individual developed into a quite transcendent personality by feeding on his wrongs and crimes. Other Gothic Romances.

The most successful producer of gothic stories was Mrs. Anne Radcliffe (1764–1823), who in the last decade of the century wrote five elaborate romances, the most famous being *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), and *The Italian* (1797). These have the faults and virtues of their type. They abound in mysterious incident, skilfully used; but they show an increasing tendency toward finding a rational explanation for apparently supernatural occurrences. In plot they are carefully constructed to keep the reader guessing as to which of several possible explanations is the true one. They are decorated with elaborate set pieces of description, involving the romantic elements of Italian landscape, as treated by the painters Claude or Salvator Rosa; but there is no accuracy in the local color, which is lavishly used, and no historical truth in the representation of manners and institutions of the past. The characters are either extravagantly false or mildly conventional. Of Elena, in *The Italian*, we are told that "her features were of the Greek outline, and though they expressed the tranquillity of an elegant mind, Mrs. Radcliffe.

her dark blue eyes sparkled with intelligence." Beyond this the stereotyped formula can hardly go.

Although Walpole in his preface to the *Castle of Otranto* points a moral for his readers, the gothic romance is frankly without any purpose save that of amusing. A far more strenuous development of the novel was going on at the hands of the group of revolutionary romanticists, of whom William Godwin (1756–1836) was the chief. With them the novel became a tract; it was put out simply as part of a propaganda. The plot was arranged, and the characters were drawn, to expose a social evil or to show its remedy. Naturally, such books subordinated art to purpose, and for that reason few of them are remembered; but one of the mildest of them, Day's *Sandford and Merton*, which dealt with education, is still a classic for children.

The Revolutionists.

The strongest book of this class was William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794). Godwin was one of the most earnest supporters in England of the French Revolution. He wrote *Caleb Williams* as a tract against the British Constitution and the ideals of aristocratic society, which Burke fought so hard to maintain. The real hero, Falkland, under great provocation has committed a murder, and in obedience to the false god of his class, Reputation, he has allowed a poor peasant to suffer the penalty for it. By accident his secretary, Caleb Williams, becomes possessed of the secret, and in self-preservation Falkland feels bound to crush him. The author gives a forcible account of the way in which an aristocrat like Falkland can use the forces of society and law against an individual of a lower class; and he presents movingly the sufferings of such an individual under this persecution. But more moving still is the picture of the ruin of a benevolent and elevated character by the possession of aristocratic power, and by subjection to aristocratic prejudices. The villain in the book is chivalry, and Falkland, even more than Williams, is its victim.

Godwin's "Caleb Williams."

CHAPTER XII

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: THE REVIVAL OF ROMANTICISM

In the course of Chapter X (p. 211) we noted the beginnings of a revolt against the restraint and formalism which the school of Dryden and Pope had imposed upon poetry. When Pope died, the classical ideal had dominated literature for a half-century. The civilizing influence of this classical era had been enormous; and its chastening effect upon literature, due to its repudiation of extravagance and excess, its insistence upon reasonableness and good form, had been in the highest degree salutary. But in its zeal for order the Augustan age had sacrificed too much, and even before Pope's commanding presence was removed, there became apparent a wide-spread dissatisfaction with the circumscribed nature of Augustan poetry. Indeed, the very perfection of Pope's attainment urged the more original of his successors to seek new fields. Accordingly, we find the group of poets who occupy the second quarter of the eighteenth century, Thomson, Collins, Young, and Gray, reaching out in various directions to reclaim for poetry sources of inspiration and modes of utterance which had been long forgotten or forbidden. These poets were the vanguard of that great movement for æsthetic freedom, which culminated at the end of the century in Wordsworth and Coleridge, and which we call the Romantic Movement.

Beginnings of the "Romantic Revolt."

The earliest of this group of poets, James Thomson (1700–1748), was a Scotchman, who came up to London in 1725. The following year he published the first section, "Win-

ter," of a poem which he afterward continued under the titles "Summer," "Spring," and "Autumn," and which was published in 1730 as *The Seasons*. To a reader of to-day, accustomed to a far deeper and subtler appreciation of nature than Thomson was capable of, this poem seems a rather humdrum chronicling of the sights, experiences, and thoughts connected with the changes of the year; and the moral digressions, the compliments to patrons, the pseudo-classic personifications, and the frequently stilted rhetoric, tend to obscure the real freshness and truth of Thomson's observation. But to the readers of his own day the novelty was great. For two generations the first-hand study of nature had been neglected. Literature had found its interests in urban life; or, if it ventured into the country at all, it was into the conventional, unreal country of the pastoral tradition. The Augustan age cared more for a formal garden in the Dutch or Italian style, than for the sublimest natural landscape in the world; and when, by the necessity of their subject, Augustan authors had touched upon ordinary natural phenomena, they had striven to conceal the rudeness of their theme by vague and elegant circumlocution. Accordingly, Thomson's poem had an aspect of daring innovation. His views of English landscape, now panoramic and now detailed, his description of the first spring showers, of the summer thunderstorms, and of the terrors of the wintry night, showed an honest understanding and love of that to which the eye had long been blind. In the Hymn with which *The Seasons* concludes, a higher mood appears; a mood of religious ecstasy in the presence of Nature, prophetic of Wordsworth, by whom, indeed, Thomson was highly valued :—

Thomson's "Seasons."

Novelty of Thomson's Nature-Studies.

> "Ye forests bend, ye harvests wave, to Him;
> Breathe your still song into the reaper's heart
> As home he goes beneath the joyous moon."

The Seasons is in blank verse, and therefore in form also is a departure from the accepted canons of the day. In *The Castle of Indolence*, published in 1748, Thomson made a still more revolutionary move, by adopting the Spenserian stanza.* His allegiance to Spenser is more than formal. He succeeds in recapturing much of the master's rich, long-drawn music; and he steeps his allegory in the Spenserian atmosphere of mirage-like splendor. The embowered castle of the enchanter Indolence and his captives, the "land of drowsyhead," with its "listless climate," where the plaint of stockdoves mingles with the sighing of the hill-side pines and with the murmur of the distant sea, are described with an art which made *The Castle of Indolence* a fruitful influence in romantic verse, even as late as Keats.

"The Castle of Indolence"; its Romantic Color.

As Thomson exemplifies the Spenserian influence at work in the eighteenth century, Collins, Young, and Gray mark the recurrence to Milton. Young reverted to Milton's blank verse; Collins and Gray abound in echoes, and indeed in literal borrowings, from Milton's earlier lyrical work. To Milton's example in "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" is perhaps due the fact that both these poets, after they had freed themselves from the other machinery of pseudo-classic verse, persisted in the use of those lifeless personifications—"wan Despair," "brown Exercise," "Music, sphere-descended Maid"—in which the Augustan age delighted.

Influence of Spenser and Milton on Romantic Revival.

William Collins (1721–1759) was a delicate, nervously irresolute spirit, who lived his life under the shadow of a constitutional despondency which deepened at last into insanity. He was an ardent disciple of Thomson's, and when he came up to London, he settled near Thomson's house in Kew Lane, where the elder poet was illustrating his romantic tendencies by writing verse in the moonlight,

* This stanza had been used earlier in the century by parodists, and by Shenstone in a short poem, *The Schoolmistress*.

while listening to the nightingales in Richmond Gardens. In 1747 Collins published a slender volume of *Odes*, in which we can trace, more surely than in Thomson's work, the recovery of the greater qualities of poetry. The exquisite "Ode to Evening" shows a sympathy with nature, and an observation of her aspects, subtler and more suggestive than that displayed in *The Seasons*. The ode is unrhymed, and has a low, meditative, twilight music. The famous "Ode on the Passions" is, on the contrary, very rich and elaborate in its metrical form, and it illustrates the influence upon Collins of Milton's lyrical art. The Passions here are shadowy personifications, and the effect of the whole poem is rather cold, but it shows clearly that the technical secrets of great lyrical poetry were beginning to be rediscovered.

Collins's Odes.

Another ode of Collins's, "On the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands" (1749), is one of the most interesting landmarks in the history of the romantic revival. The purpose of the poem is to recommend the native folk-lore of Scotland as poetic material. Collins lets his fancy play over the folk-myths of water-witch, pygmy, and will-o'-the-wisp, and over all the creatures of that fairy world which the mediæval mind had created. With kindling imagination he describes the wild Northern islands, whose inhabitants subsist on birds' eggs found among the sea-cliffs where the bee is never heard to murmur; and he transports us to that mysterious region, where "beneath the showery West" the buried kings stalk forth at midnight

"Ode on Popular Superstitions."

> "In pageant robes and wreathed in sheeny gold,
> And on their twilight tombs aërial council hold."

Here we see several of the leading traits of romanticism; interest in the mysterious and supernatural, in strange and remote conditions of human life, and in the Middle Ages as they appeared in vague chiaroscuro through a veil of dream.

Collins's constitutional melancholy found little expression in his verse; it appears only as a kind of romantic sensibility penetrating his best lyrics, such as the "Dirge in Cymbeline" and "How sleep the brave," and casting here and there a faint flush of warmth over his odes. The funereal broodings and romantic despair, characteristic of the new movement, found their most striking expression in the *Night Thoughts* of Edward Young (1681–1765), published in 1742–1744, when the author was over sixty. The *Night Thoughts* are a series of reflections upon the brevity and tragic uncertainties of life, leading to a view of religion as man's consoler. The poet dwells, sometimes with tragic force and gloomy magnificence of phrase, oftener with a hollow and pompous rhetoric, upon the solitude of the tomb, and the grim circumstances of death. In the same year in which the *Night Thoughts* were begun, a far greater poet, Thomas Gray, began his famous "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," in which is revealed the same sombre view of man's life and destiny, though softened and broadened and humanized in a way to make the poem not only a perfect work of art, but a permanent expression of the mood it embodies.

Young's "Night Thoughts."

Thomas Gray (1716–1771) lived the life of a scholar and recluse at Cambridge, where in his later years he held a professorship of history, but delivered no lectures. The range of his intellectual interests, as shown by his letters, journals, and prose remains, was immense, including, besides ancient and modern literature, music, painting, architecture, and natural science. He was sensitive to all the finer influences of the time; and his development furnishes a kind of index to the spiritual forces at work, many years before they found a general outlet.

Gray.

Gray was a delightful letter-writer and diarist, and his letters and journals form a very complete commentary on the intellectual movements of the period. Particularly in-

teresting are those passages which show in him the new sensibility to picturesque scenery and to Gothic architecture, two of the great enthusiasms of the romantic innovators. In a letter written in early life from Switzerland, during a protracted tour which he made with his friend Horace Walpole, he writes of the scenery about the Grande Chartreuse: "Not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry. . . One need not have a very fantastic imagination to see spirits there at noonday." Years after, in the Scotch highlands, he writes of the mountains as "those monstrous creatures of God," and declares that they "ought to be visited in pilgrimage once a year." A generation before Gray wrote from the Grande Chartreuse, Addison had crossed the Alps, and dismissed the experience thus: "A very troublesome journey. . . You can't imagine how I am pleased with the sight of a plain." Gray's enthusiasm over the marvels of mediæval architecture at Rheims and Siena, contrasts also with Addison's comparison of the nobility of the classic Pantheon with the "meanness of manner" in the Gothic cathedrals. Toward the end of his life Gray made one of his "Lilliputian journeys" to the English Lake country afterward made famous by Wordsworth's poetry. The journal which he kept on this occasion is remarkable for the intimate sympathy which it shows with the changes of mood in the landscape, under variations of weather and time of day. To both Thomson and Collins the landscape had been chiefly a picture; Gray sees nature with a more modern eye, as a living thing full of sentiment and meaning.

His Appreciation of Nature and of Gothic Architecture.

Gray's poetry, the bulk of which is very small, falls into three periods. His early odes, written in 1742, of which the best known are those "On Spring" and "On a Distant Prospect of Eton College," have much of the moralizing tone of Queen Anne poetry; though in their metrical form, in their sympathy with nature, and

His First Period.

in their vague dejection, they show the romantic leaven at work. Gray's second period (1750–1757) includes the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard"* and his two most ambitious odes, "The Progress of Poesy" and "The Bard." The Elegy, perhaps the most widely known and loved of English poems, is the finest flower of that "literature of melancholy" which Milton's *Il Penseroso,* acting upon the awakening romantic sense of the second quarter of the eighteenth century, brought forth in remarkable profusion. A large part of the charm of the Elegy comes from the poet's personal, sensitive approach to his subject. He lingers in the churchyard, noting the signs of approaching nightfall, until the atmosphere of twilight musing is established, after which his reflections upon life and death have a tone of sad and intimate sincerity. In its recognition of the dignity of simple lives lived close to the soil, and in its sympathy with their fate, the Elegy shows the breaking-up of the hard forms into which social feeling had stiffened, and looks forward to the humanitarian enthusiasm which marked the later phases of romantic poetry. "The Progress of Poesy" is a Pindaric ode, of the same type as Dryden's "Alexander's Feast," but (under Milton's influence) it is more richly rhymed, fuller of metrical artifice and surprise. It has the too conscious elegance of diction and employs the pseudo-classic mythology of Queen Anne poetry, but in the richness of its music it shows the romantic temper. "The Bard" is more distinctly romantic, both in subject and treatment. An ancient minstrel, the last of the Welsh singers, escaped from Edward's massacre, stops the king in a wild mountain-pass, and prophesies the terrors which are to gather over his descendants. This poem, with its imaginative rekindling of the passion of an ancient and perished people, shows, like Collins's ode on the Superstitions of the Highlands, that reversion to

His Second Period: "The Elegy."

"The Progress of Poesy."

"The Bard."

* Begun in 1742, but laid aside and not finished until 1750.

the Middle Ages for inspiration, which soon became the leading feature of romantic art. The third period of Gray's production shows how deep a hold mediævalism had already taken on him. He mastered Icelandic, at that time an almost unheard-of language, and studied Welsh. The fruit of these researches was two powerful translations, as grim and picturesque as the most romantic heart could desire,—"The Fatal Sisters" and "The Descent of Odin" (1761).

His Third Period: Icelandic and Welsh Studies.

This newly awakened interest in the Middle Ages led Horace Walpole to rebuild his villa at Strawberry Hill, in the "gothic" style, and to write his celebrated gothic romance, *The Castle of Otranto* (see p. 250). The word "gothic" was used vaguely to cover everything mediæval, or supposedly mediæval. A great stimulus was given to the curiosity concerning mediæval literature, by the appearance in 1765 of a ballad collection entitled *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, gathered together by Bishop Percy, an antiquarian scholar with literary tastes. These ballads had a great effect in quickening the romantic impulse, by virtue of their naïve feeling and simple, passionate expression. About the same time as the *Reliques*, appeared another book which, though not so genuine, had an even greater effect. This was an epic poem in irregular chanting prose, entitled *Fingal*, purporting to have been originally written in the ancient Gaelic tongue of the Scotch highlands, by Ossian, the son of Fingal, in a dim heroic past. The figures of the story are shadowy and large, the scenery wild, the imagery, at least to an uncritical reader, touched with a certain primitive sublimity and grandeur, and the whole pervaded by an atmosphere of melancholy which is emphasized in the sighing cadences of the style. Here is a specimen:

"Percy's Reliques."

Ossian.

By the side of a rock on the hill, beneath the ancient trees, old Ossian sat on the moss; the last of the race of Fingal.

Dull through the leafless trees he heard the voice of the north. . . . Fair with her locks of gold, her smooth neck, and her breasts of snow; fair as the spirits of the hills when at silent noon they glide along the heath—came Minvane the maid. Fingal, she softly saith, loose me my brother Gaul. Loose me the hope of my race, the terror of all but Fingal. . . . Take thy brother, O Minvane, thou fairer than the snows of the north!

These "Ossianic" poems seem to have been in large part a clever literary fabrication, the work of a young Scotchman named Macpherson, who probably got his hint from genuine fragments of old Erse poetry. Their air of primeval sublimity was specious enough to make them pass current, with an age which was weary of the classical traditions and eager for novel sensation; and their influence was enormous, not only in England but upon the continent, in furthering the new taste for the mysterious past.

Less successful in attracting attention, but more significant because springing from a deeper artistic instinct, was the series of literary forgeries put forth by the "marvellous boy," Thomas Chatterton (1752–1770). His childhood was passed in the shadow of the church of St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol; and the beautiful old building, with its rich historical associations, threw upon his sensitive mind a spell which was almost a mania. Some old parchments from the archives of the church fell into his hands; while deciphering them he conceived the daring scheme of composing poems and prose pieces in the mediæval style and diction, and of palming them off upon the good burghers of the town, as originals which he had unearthed in the muniment room of the church. Incredible as it seems, he began this work in his twelfth year. The first "historical" document which he submitted to his townsmen, was a description of the opening of the old Bristol bridge. As this aroused some interest, he composed an elaborate series of poems and prose pieces grouped about

Chatterton's Mediæval Imitations.

the figure of William Canynge, mayor of Bristol under Henry VI., purporting to be the work of one Rowley, a fifteenth century priest. Some of the poems, especially "Aella," "The Bristowe Tragedy," and the "Ballade of Charitie," are of remarkable beauty and force; and when we remember that the author of them was scarcely more than a child, they become astonishing. After a proud struggle to make his living by his pen, Chatterton ended his morbid and amazingly precocious life by suicide in a London garret, at the age of nineteen. He was a signal example of the romantic temper destined soon to spread through the nation. It was fitting that, when the battle of the new poetry was fought and won, Keats should dedicate *Endymion* to his memory, and Shelley should place him in "Adonais" among the "inheritors of unfulfilled renown."

Persistence of the Classical Traditions.

It must be held in mind that the new literary movement which we have been tracing, was the work of a small coterie of men, for the most part comparatively obscure. They were the revolutionists, who had declared their independence of the reigning mode. But the conservative writers, with Johnson and Goldsmith at their head, still had an almost unimpaired authority, and the classical traditions continued to be widely accepted to the very end of the century. Symptoms of alarm, however, are frequent among those writers who felt bound to support the conservative side; among which signs the chief is Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, written to uphold the old doctrines and to confound the new. Under this stimulus, the satellites of the great Doctor preached with renewed fervor the gospel of conformity; outwardly the classical traditions remained all but intact. But inwardly they were being rapidly impaired. Goldsmith himself, in his *Deserted Village* and *Vicar of Wakefield*, shows touches of the new spirit. Burke, as has been shown, fought the battle of political conservatism with romantic weapons. The novels of Richardson, by their

Inward Weakening of Classicism.

intimate study of the human heart, and those of Sterne, by their strange and fascinating sentimentalism, tended to overthrow reason, and to set up emotion, as the guiding principle of literature. Indeed, the whole eighteenth century novel, though it lies outside the romantic movement narrowly considered, worked in the same direction with it, by enlarging men's sympathy with human life in all its forms.

Crabbe.

After 1780, signs of change in the literary heavens became more frequent and pronounced. George Crabbe (1754–1832), although he used the couplet verse and considered himself a faithful member of the school of Pope, marks the advent of a new realism in the poetic treatment of human life. He was born in a poor fishing village on the German ocean; and in his best early poem, *The Village* (1783), he painted the life of the poor as he knew it, sternly and uncompromisingly,—the steaming flats and stubbly commons, the damp and dirty houses, the hostile sea, from which only a wretched living could be wrung, the men and women degraded by harsh labor and coarse dissipation. By his sincerity he drove the artificial sentiment of the age from one more of its strongholds. Crabbe was generously befriended by Burke, at a time when he was in dire distress; and through Burke's influence he was admitted to holy orders. He settled in the country, and for twenty-two years after his first success, was completely silent. When he came forward once more, with *The Borough* (1810) and *Tales of the Hall* (1819), it was to find himself in a changed world, in which singers and seers far greater than he, had transformed the face of literature; so that his country sketches and tales, written still in the old-fashioned couplet, looked oddly stiff and belated. But his work, at its best, is as sterling as it is ungraceful, and the earlier portion of it did good service in breaking up the artificialism of the eighteenth century.

His Realism.

A more potent, but equally involuntary work of revolution was performed by William Cowper (1731–1800). He was a life-long victim of nervous despondency, and to this weakness was added an abnormal proneness to religious terror. His early life was spent at Westminster school, and as a law-student in London. Fits of gayety, and states of mystical exaltation, were succeeded by terrible periods of depression, and at last by insanity. At the age of fifty-two, he was living in the obscure village of Olney, where, under the care of a widow, Mrs. Unwin, several years his senior, he was spending a peaceful interval between two attacks of religious melancholia. As an intellectual pastime, he began to write verse, in which he had some proficiency. At first he produced mere essays, in the dullest abstract style of the preceding age. At the suggestion of one Lady Austen, a bright and somewhat worldly woman who was attracted by his shy, distraught personality, he began a long poem in blank verse. The subject playfully suggested by Lady Austen was "The Sofa," an article of furniture then novel. Cowper dutifully "sang the sofa." But he did not cease there; he proceeded to paint with animated realism the landscapes, the changes of seasons, the human types and employments of the rural world about him, as well as his own simple pleasures and occupations. The poem was published in 1785, as *The Task*. A large portion of *The Task* is conventional enough, to be sure, and very dreary reading; but here and there one comes upon little vignettes,—the figure of a teamster driving homeward in a snowstorm, a postman hurrying through the village with his eagerly awaited bag of news from the great world, ploughmen at work in the flat fields by the Ouse,—which are instinct with vivid natural life. The amusing ballad of "John Gilpin" also belongs to this bright period of Cowper's life. He afterward relapsed into melancholy, broken at intervals by a ray of poetic inspiration such as produced his touching

Cowper.

"The Task."

lines "On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture Out of Norfolk," deservedly the best known of his poems. His last poem, entitled "The Castaway," is a cry of despair from the depths of visionary anguish into which he was now hopelessly plunged.

While Crabbe and Cowper were at work, two other innovators, endowed with vast energy and working with superb self-confidence, were already passing beyond them. One of these was William Blake, an obscure London engraver; the other was Robert Burns, a Scotch ploughman.

Blake.

William Blake (1757–1827), though a poet and a mystic of the most extraordinary genius, had little or no influence on his generation. The greater part of his message was so obscure, so wild, so incoherently delivered, that even now, after much study, his commentators have succeeded in making clear only a portion of what he wrote. He belonged to that type of mind which in superstitious ages is called "possessed." When a very young child, he one day screamed with fear, because, he said, he had seen God put his face to the window. In boyhood he saw several angels, very bright, standing in a tree by the roadside. In his manhood, the earth and the air were for him full of spiritual presences, all concerned with his fate or with that of his friends. The following extract from some verses, written in mature manhood during a country walk, are exceedingly characteristic:

His Mysticism.

With happiness stretched across the hills
In a cloud that dewy sweetness distills;
With a blue sky spread over with wings
And a mild sun that mounts and sings;
With trees and fields full of fairy elves,
And little devils who fight for themselves;
With angels planted in hawthorn bowers,
And God himself in the passing hours;
With silver angels across my way,
And golden demons that none can stay;

With my father hovering upon the wind,
And my brother Robert just behind,—
And my brother John, the evil one,
In a black cloud making his moan;
With a thousand angels upon the wind
Pouring disconsolate from behind
To drive them off,—and before my way
A frowning thistle implores my stay . . .
With my inward eye 'tis an old man grey;
With my outward, a thistle upon my way.

This sounds like downright madness, but Blake was not mad in any ordinary sense of the term. With a metaphysical gift which made it natural for him to move in an ideal world, he combined a visual imagination of abnormal, almost miraculous power, which enabled him to give bodily form to abstractions, and to summon at any moment before him "armies of angels that soar, legions of demons that lurk." Outwardly he led a regular, quiet, laborious life, all the while pouring out poems, drawings, and vast "prophetical books" full of shadowy mythologies and mystical thought-systems, which show that his inward life was one of perhaps unparalleled excitement and adventure. Leaving aside the prophetical books, which are too obscure to count for much in the history of literature, his fame as a poet rests chiefly on his *Poetical Sketches*, and on his *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. Amid much that is unfinished, and no little that is baffling to the intelligence, these little volumes contain some of the simplest and sweetest, as well as some of the most powerful short poems in the language. At his best, Blake has a simplicity as great as Wordsworth's, and a magic which reminds us of Coleridge, combined with a depth and pregnancy of meaning peculiar to himself. It must be admitted that he is at his best very rarely, and then, as it were, by accident. In him the whole transcendental side of the Romantic movement was expressed by hint and implication, though not by accomplishment.

What Blake did toward reclaiming lost realms of the spirit and the imagination, Burns did, in more signal degree, toward reopening lost channels of feeling.

Burns.

He was born in a two-roomed clay cottage in Ayrshire, West Scotland, in 1759. His parents were God-fearing peasants of the best Scotch type, who worked heroically to keep the wolf from the door, and to give their children an elementary education. At fifteen Robert, the eldest, did a grown man's work in ploughing and reaping. Looking back upon his youth in after years he described it as "the cheerless gloom of a hermit, with the unceasing toil of a galley slave." But this is clearly an exaggeration, if not a total misrepresentation; for we have his youthful poems to prove him wrong. The youth who wrote the "Epistle to Davie," with its manly philosophy and genial temper, the "Address to the Deil," with its rich humor and fun, the "Cotter's Saturday Night," bathed in its tender light of fireside happiness, was neither a hermit nor a galley-slave, but simply a healthy, impetuous farm-lad, with a warm heart, a rich nature, and a God-given genius for song. He had had a few books of poetry to read, and had heard, as every Scotch peasant hears, the floating ballad verse of the countryside. Then he had begun to rhyme, almost as spontaneously as a bird begins to sing, or, as he says himself, "for fun." Since he was a spontaneous, sincere, and absolutely original nature, the verses he strung together carelessly, as he followed his plough "in glory and in joy, along the mountain-side," were contributions to the world's spiritual experience; and since he was also a born master of words, they were contributions to the world's sum of beauty.

His Early Life and Poetry.

Between his twenty-third and his twenty-sixth year, Burns wrote the larger portion of those poems which have made his name loved wherever the Lowland dialect is understood. In these he revealed with wonderful complete-

ness the rural Scotland of his day, illuminated with a blended light of humor and tenderness the common experiences of his peasant world, not forbearing to treat its unedifying, and even its scandalous phases, with racy zest and laughing abandon. His large genial nature embraces everything human in the world about him. He celebrates "Scotch Drink," holds up to laughter the praying hypocrite "Holy Willie," and paints the riotous games of Hallowe'en; but he can turn immediately to mourn over the "wee, modest crimson-tipped flower" uprooted in the furrow on the mountain-side, and to find in a field-mouse whose snug home has been broken up by the ploughshare, a thing to touch the springs of human pity.

By the time Burns had reached his twenty-sixth year, his wild ways had got him into desperate trouble; his father was dead, and the hand-to-hand fight that he and his brother Gilbert were waging with poverty, bade fair to end in absolute failure. Distracted and despairing, Burns determined to go to the West Indies. In order to raise the passage money, someone suggested that he should publish the poems which lay in his desk in the cottage at Mossgiel. This he did, his friends getting enough subscribers from among the local gentry to make the venture pay. Neither the author nor anyone else hoped for more than a local popularity. The little book was published at Kilmarnock in 1786, with the title, *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*. The few pounds brought in by the small edition were in his pocket, and his trunk was sent forward, when a letter from Edinburgh arrived which changed the whole face of his fortunes. It was from an eminent scholar and critic, who praised the book highly and called for another and a larger edition. Burns posted to Edinburgh, heralded and fêted on the way like a hero of romance. A winter in the Scotch capital followed, during which the ploughman poet was petted and lionized; and another winter during which his great friends cooled toward him as an exploited attrac-

tion. Then he went back to Ayrshire, with an appointment as "gauger" (inspector of the liquor customs) in his pocket, married Jean Armour, and settled down to the task of combining farming and revenue service with poetry. His duties as gauger covered ten parishes, and compelled him to ride two hundred miles a week; what was worse, they threw him constantly into riotous company, where his wit and eloquence were always in uproarious demand. His farm naturally went to ruin, and he found time for little poetry except short snatches of song. With the exception of the "Jolly Beggars" and the immortal "Tam o' Shanter," Burns did no more sustained work. But in recompense he poured out hundreds of songs,—drinking songs, love songs, songs of patriotism, —some of which are among the eternal possessions of the race. Things went from bad to worse with him, and he died in 1796, at the age of thirty-seven, a self-defeated and embittered man. He saved others, himself he could not save. He poured into the world a current of feeling, electrical and life-giving. He revealed and made once more the heritage of all, the fountains of tenderness and passion, of natural tears and mirth; fountains never sealed to the simple and lowly, who are always "romantic," in any age and under any fashion of thought.

His Later Life: Songs.

CHAPTER XIII

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: THE TRIUMPH OF ROMANTICISM

THE "Romantic Movement," the beginnings of which have been traced in the preceding chapter, was by no means confined to literature. In England the religious revival under John Wesley, in Germany the new philosophy put forth by Emanuel Kant, in France the immense social upheaval of the French Revolution, all were symptoms, early or late, of the same great influence working for liberation. When the movement, on its literary side, had become sufficiently pronounced to be subject to definition, the essence of it was felt to be a "return to nature;" a welcoming back into life of all that was spontaneous and sincere; a reassertion of the right of man to indulge all his spiritual instincts, even the wildest and most wayward. This reassertion naturally took two directions, one outward, toward whatever was remote and unusual, one inward, into the heart of common things, which, when looked at closely, were found to be full of new meanings. These two impulses found expression in the work of the two poets in whom the English romantic movement first became conscious of its real aims, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth.

The Romantic Movement a "Return to Nature."

A happy chance brought these two poets together in the impressionable period of their young manhood, when Coleridge was twenty-five, and Wordsworth only two years older. Both had felt the storm and stress of the revolutionary age. Each brought to the other just that kind of stimulus needed to kindle his mind to creative activity; and together, they gathered the diffused and uncertain rays of the new poetic illumination into an orb of steady

splendor. In them the new poetry first found an adequate and unmistakable voice; and the little volume called *Lyrical Ballads*, which they published together in 1798, shows the two impulses of the new poetry in full play. Coleridge's contributions treat mysterious, supernatural subjects in such a way as to give to them an unparalleled illusion of reality; Wordsworth's treat simple, everyday themes of nature and human life in such a way as to reveal in them unsuspected elements of mystery and awe.

Double Aspect of the Movement Illustrated by Coleridge and Wordsworth.

Coleridge was born at Ottery St. Mary's, Devonshire, in 1772. He had a precocious boyhood as a "blue-coat" at Christ's Hospital, the famous charity school in London. While at Cambridge he plunged, with his friend Robert Southey, then a student at Oxford, into the generous enthusiasms aroused by the French Revolution. After graduation the two young idealists, in their ardor for social reform, conceived a grand scheme of "pantisocracy," which they dreamed of realizing in the shape of a utopian community to be established across the ocean, on the banks of the Susquehanna. Preliminary to emigration, Coleridge published a volume of juvenile verse, and married; by 1797 he had a young family on his hands, and had exchanged pantisocracy for a tiny cottage in the village of Nether Stowey, in the Quantock hills. In 1797, Wordsworth, together with his wonderful sister Dorothy, moved to Alfoxden, in order to be near Coleridge, whom he had met the year before. To Wordsworth the companionship meant much; to Coleridge it meant everything. Under the bracing influence of Wordsworth's hardy, original mind, supplemented by the quick sympathy and suggestiveness of Dorothy, Coleridge shot up suddenly into full poetic stature. In little more than a year (1797–1798) he wrote all his greatest poems, "Genevieve," "The Dark Ladie," "Kubla Khan," "The Ancient Mariner," and the first part of "Christabel."

Early Life of Coleridge.

The rest of Coleridge's life, though he wrote a good deal of verse, has little importance in the history of poetry. He made a trip, in the Wordsworths' company, to Germany, and there became absorbed in the philosophy of Kant. So far as his later life had any definite purpose, it was spent in interpreting the principles of this philosophy to his countrymen. His bondage to the opium habit, added to an inherent weakness of will, made his life a heart-rending succession of half-attempts and whole failures. He planned many books, and partly executed a few; but his chief influence was exerted in talk with his friends, and with those young men who, as his reputation for transcendental wisdom increased, resorted to him as to an oracle of hope and faith, in the years which followed the failure of the French Revolution. By consent of all who heard him Coleridge was one of the most wonderful talkers that ever lived. His verse, fragmentary and of small bulk though it is, gives him rank as one of the world's great poets.

His Later Life.

As has been said above, Coleridge represents perfectly that side of the romantic imagination which seeks to lose itself in dream and marvel; to conjure up a world of phantasmal scenery and of supernatural happenings, illuminated by "a light that never was on land or sea." "Kubla Khan" paints an oriental dream-picture, as splendid and as impalpable as the palaces and plunging rivers and "caverns measureless to man," which we sometimes see lifted for a moment out of a stormy sunset. "Christabel," which seems in its fragmentary form to have been planned as the story of a young girl fallen under the spell of an unearthly demon in woman's shape, moves in a mediæval atmosphere blended of beauty and horror; a horror poignantly vague, freezing the heart with its suggestion of all that is malign and cruel in the spirit world. "The Ancient Mariner," Coleridge's one finished masterpiece, stands almost alone in literature

Characteristics of his Poetry.

for the completeness with which it creates an illusion of reality while dealing with images and events manifestly unreal. Its great pictures of night and morning, of arctic and tropic seas; its melodies of whispering keel and rustling sails, and of dead throats singing spectral carols; its strange music, richer and more various even than that of "Kubla Khan," though not so grand and spacious,—these characteristics, to say nothing of the fruitful lesson lying at its heart, make the "Ancient Mariner" a poem with scarcely an equal in its kind. It is manifestly a dream, but a dream caught in a magic mirror, which holds it spellbound in immortal freshness. The "Ancient Mariner" was Coleridge's chief contribution to *Lyrical Ballads;* in itself it represented a whole domain splendidly conquered for the reawakened imaginations of men.

William Wordsworth was born in 1770, at Cockermouth in Cumberland; and he received his early education at the country grammar-school at Hawkshead, in the Lake region. After leaving the University of Cambridge in 1791, he spent two years in France, watching with enthusiastic hope the middle stages of the French Revolution, and sharing in the ardent social enthusiasm which summed itself up in the motto of the revolutionists, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." He was in Paris late in 1792, before the awful excesses of the Reign of Terror began; and he was on the point of throwing in his lot with the revolutionists, when a stoppage of his funds compelled him to return to England. The later course of the Revolution induced in him a profound despondency and pessimism. During this critical period, he says, his sister Dorothy's influence kept alive the poet in him, by directing his mind toward the sources of permanent strength and joy, which lie in nature and in human sympathy: Wordsworth's Life.

> "She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;
> And humble cares, and delicate fears;
> A heart, the fountain of sweet tears,
> And love, and thought, and joy."

Their residence at Alfoxden, with Coleridge, 1797–1798, marks the true beginning of Wordsworth's poetic career; for up to this time, though he had written much, he had not found his genuine matter and manner. In "We are Seven," "Expostulation and Reply," "Lines in Early Spring," "Tintern Abbey," and other pieces written at this time, the true Wordsworth is apparent. During the winter in Germany which followed, he added to these pieces some of his most characteristic poems, such as "She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways," "Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower," and "The Two April Mornings." On his return, he settled with his sister in a cottage at Grasmere, and in 1802 he married. At Grasmere, and afterward at Rydal Mount at the other end of the lake, he lived for fifty years among the Cumberland dalesmen, leading an existence as pastoral and as frugal as theirs, reading little and meditating much, looking with deep unwearied delight upon the mountains and skies and waters which had fascinated him in boyhood. A small legacy from a friend, and later an appointment as distributor of stamps, made him independent, and left virtually his whole time free for the pursuit of poetry, which was for him as for Milton not only an art but a solemn ministry. The heights of his poetic achievement are marked successively by such pieces as "Michael" (1800); "The Leech-Gatherer," the sonnets to Milton, to Toussaint L'Ouverture, "It is a Beauteous Evening," and "Westminster Bridge" (1802); "The Solitary Reaper" and "Yarrow Unvisited" (1803); the "Ode to Duty," "To a Skylark," and *The Prelude* (1805); "The World Is Too Much With Us," and The Ode on the Intimations of Immortality (1806); "Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle" (1807), and *The Excursion* (1814). After this last date Wordsworth's genius gradually stiffened, and he produced little more poetry of the first order. This decline in poetic power in his later years, was accompanied by a reaction from

the social and political radicalism of his youth, into a firm conservatism, which led him to uphold existing institutions of church and state, in the spirit of Burke. For many years his poetry met with neglect and ridicule, but he gradually drew to himself the attention and veneration of the best minds. The crowd turned aside to follow first Scott, then Byron, and then Tennyson; but those whose suffrages were of most value rallied in increasing numbers about the "good old steel-gray figure" of the Cumberland poet; and before his death in 1850, he enjoyed a late but sure renown.

His Nature-Poetry: its Sensitiveness.

In Wordsworth the growing sensibility to natural phenomena, which we have traced from Thomson and Collins down to the end of the eighteenth century, reached its height. He was gifted by nature with an eye and an ear marvellously sensitive to those slight and elusive impressions which most persons pass by without noticing at all. This sensibility was increased by a long life spent in the country, in a region full of charm and even of grandeur; and it was made efficacious by a remarkable serenity and patience, which enabled him to gather all the riches of the inanimate world, without haste and without disturbing excitement. Hence his poetry is full of exquisitely noted sights and sounds,—the shadow of the daisy on the stone, the mist which follows the hare as she runs across a rain-drenched moor, the echo of the cuckoo's voice, the varying noise of waters, and the many voices of the wind. "To read one of his longer pastoral poems for the first time," it has been said, "is like a day spent in a new country." And all these sights and sounds are given with absolute truthfulness to the fact. There is no effect of heightening nature, of seeing her clothed in a light brighter or stranger than her own. Wordsworth writes "with his eye on the object," content to portray what he sees. He learned from Burns that "verse can build a princely throne on humble

Its Truth.

truth"; and everywhere he gives an impression of unquestioning, reverent faithfulness to the fact which his senses have perceived. It follows that the greater part of his nature-studies are in a low key; in the rareness of their grandeurs and glories, they breathe the modesty of nature. Especially noteworthy is the predominance in Wordsworth of broad elementary impressions,—mere darkness and light, the silence of the sky, the moon "looking round her when the heavens are bare," the twilight with its one star, the breathlessness of the evening sea, the lonesomeness of upland fields, the "sleep that is among the lonely hills." It is the keenness of Wordsworth's sensibility to nature, and his quiet, religious acceptance of her as she is, and his unwearied delight in her broadest and simplest phases, which together make him the first of her poets.

Its Breadth.

This same sobriety and truth of tone, this same reverent regard for the great commonplaces of life, characterize also Wordsworth's treatment of human nature. He deals with the broad elementary passions, the everyday affections, occupations, and duties, in a state of society where man is simplest and nearest to the soil. In many of his best poems, indeed, the human beings whom he pictures seem almost a part of the landscape, an emanation from nature herself, like the trees or the rocks. The figure of the Leech-gatherer on the moor seems as much a part of the natural landscape as the pool by which he stands; the woman who speaks to the poet in "Stepping Westward" seems a part of the sunset, so blended is she with the scene; in "The Highland Reaper" the singing of the girl comes out of the heart of the day, like the spirit of ancestral Scotland telling over its "old unhappy far-off things, and battles long ago;" she is hardly more of a human personality than the cuckoo or the nightingale to which the poet compares her voice. Even when he looks closer at his human characters, and

His Treatment of Human Nature.

shows us their passions and the accidents of their life, they still partake of the simplicity and breadth of external nature, reminding us of the characters of Bible story or of the simple tragic figures of the French peasant painter Millet. The story of Margaret, in the first book of *The Prelude*, illustrates this, as does in a still better way "Michael," the greatest example of Wordsworth's power to give to the simple tragedies of the peasant world a monumental impressiveness. He is the poet of human life in its lowest terms, of that joy and sorrow which is "in widest commonalty spread." He looks to find the true significance of life on its lower levels, as did Crabbe; but with far more sympathy, depth, and spiritual glow than Crabbe was able to bring to bear upon his subject. The best praise he can give his own wife is that she is a "being breathing thoughtful breath," in whose countenance meet sweet household records and promises. For Milton his best praise is that, although his "soul was like a star and dwelt apart," yet it laid upon itself "the lowliest duties" along "life's common way." With Wordsworth the doctrine of simplicity was a thorough-going one, and entered into his entire conception not only of art but of life.

His Mysticism.

Yet we should have but a very partial understanding of Wordsworth's personality and of his poetic meaning, if we stopped here. There was in him, besides the realist and the moralist, the mystic. Nature is for him, even when he portrays her external aspect with the most naked truth, never merely a physical fact; nor has man, even when most blended in with her external features, merely a physical relation to her. On the contrary, Nature is everywhere mystically transfused with spirit, and speaks mystically to the spirit in man, working upon him by the power of kinship and mutual understanding. Perhaps the most complete expression of this aspect of his thought is "Tintern Abbey," which appeared in the *Lyrical Ballads*. "Tintern Abbey" was written dur-

ing a walking tour which Wordsworth took in 1798, in company with his sister, through a country familiar to him in earlier years. The well-remembered scenery of the river Wye calls up before his musing thought the picture of his boyhood, with its passionate absorption in nature, when "the sounding cataract haunted him like a passion," and the rocks, the mountains, and the woods were to him "an appetite." He shows how the influences of nature, acting upon the plastic soul of youth, bear fruit in later life, in "sensations sweet felt in the blood and felt along the heart," and "little nameless unremembered acts of kindness and of love"; and how they lift the spirit which remembers them, to

"Tintern Abbey."

> that blessed mood
> In which the burden of the mystery,
> In which the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world
> Is lightened . . .
> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things.

And he suggests a metaphysical explanation for this strange power which Nature has to soothe and ennoble the human soul, namely, that throughout Nature there is diffused the active spirit of God, living and working in her :—

> I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man ;
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
> And rolls through all things.

"Tintern Abbey" gives us almost a complete "programme" of Wordsworth's poetic career. In it we see marked out clearly the main paths which his mind followed during a long lifetime of lonely contemplation. In many noble poems he developed the three themes here given out: the eternal beauty of Nature, which waits everywhere about us "to haunt, to startle, and waylay"; the power of that beauty to heal, gladden, and fortify whoever gives it welcome; and the mystic source of this power, the spirit of God, hidden yet apparent in all the visible creation, building for itself a "metropolitan temple in the hearts" of simple and unselfish men. Perhaps the most exquisite expression he has given to the idea of Nature's formative power upon the soul, and through the soul upon the body of man, is the poem beginning "Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower."

His "Metaphysical Imagination."

The instinct to perceive nature and human life in transcendental terms, was very early manifested in Wordsworth. In his school-days at Hawkshead, the world would sometimes, he tells us, seem suddenly to dissolve, and he would fall into an abyss of idealism from which he had to bring himself back to reality by grasping at the wall by the roadside, or by stooping to pick up a stone. This habit of mind, sobered and strengthened by reflection, pervades all his poetry, and gives to it a peculiarly stimulating character. In reading him, we never know when the actual landscape and the simple human story will widen out suddenly into some vaster theme, looking beyond space and time; so that he awakens in us a kind of spiritual apprehension or expectancy which forces us to look below the surface of his simplest poem, and to be on the alert for a meaning deeper than its primary one. His greatest poem, the "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality," is also the one in which the speculation is boldest. In this wonderful ode, which Emerson called "the high-water

"Intimations of Immortality."

mark of poetry in the nineteenth century," the poet looks back with passionate regret to the lost radiance of his childhood, and tries to connect childhood reassuringly not only with manhood and old age, but also with a previous existence, whence it brings its light of innocence and joy. The poem is a product of that majestic kind of metaphysical imagination, which transcends space and time, and makes

> "Our noisy years seem moments in the being
> Of the eternal silence."

In the Intimations and other poems mystically conceived, Wordsworth took the inheritance of the seventeenth century mystics, and of Blake, and gave it a clearer development, just as in his naturalistic poetry he carried to larger issues the work of Cowper, Crabbe, and Burns.

Difficulties in Approaching Wordsworth.

The reader who approaches Wordsworth for the first time must be prepared for certain difficulties and even disappointments. In the first place, his poetry is so devoid of artificial heightening that its intensity, its passion, its intimate truth, are apt to appeal slightly to a taste accustomed to more obvious excitement. In the second place, Wordsworth writes in two manners, one inspired, the other pedestrian; and a very large body of his verse was the product of his pedestrian mood. He seemed unable to distinguish in his work between the supreme and the commonplace. Another source of difficulty is his lack of humor, which sometimes led him, as in "The Idiot Boy," into manifest absurdity. In his search after the pathos of common life, and in his desire for rigorously simple language, he was not infrequently betrayed into sheer prose. His nature was extremely self-centred and dogmatic, and in ordinary moods it worked somewhat stiffly. But just in proportion to the amount of spiritual energy required to fuse this reluctant metal of his mind into a plastic and glowing state, is the

beauty and permanency of the product of his highest creative moments; so that his finest poems seem as little subject to the touch of time, as immune from decay, as the mountains or the stars.

It has long been traditional to associate with Wordsworth and Coleridge, to form the triad of "Lake poets," the name of Robert Southey, Coleridge's colleague in the youthful scheme of pantisocracy. Southey was a man of amiable and nobly upright character, and of unwearied industry; he had a pure-hearted passion for literature, and an unfaltering belief in his own poetic mission. He wrote several very long and ambitious romantic poems, of which *The Curse of Kehama* is perhaps the best; and many prose works, among which his *Life of Nelson* holds a worthy place in literature as a model of succinct and vivid biography. Some of his short poems have an assured place with posterity, especially his verses "To My Books," in which his devotion to the literary life finds classic expression. But his long poems have lost most of their interest, and he holds his place in the Lake triad less by poetic gift than by personal association.

Southey.

We have seen how the revolt against eighteenth century actuality and "common-sense," found expression in the wild phantasmagories of Blake, and in the strange dream-world of Coleridge. We have seen likewise how the reaction from the rigid social aristocracy of the eighteenth century, and from its contempt for the lowly aspects of human existence, led, through the harsh realism of Crabbe, to Burns's passionate vindication of the primary instincts, and to Wordsworth's solemn revealment of the majesty of simple lives. We have seen, too, how the protest against eighteenth century "urbanity" and absorption in the life of the town, led, through Cowper's mild delight in rural things, to the piercing tenderness of Burns's "Mountain Daisy," and to the mystical insight of Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey." In like manner, the revulsion

Main Lines of Romantic Revolt Summarized.

from the Augustan indifference to the Middle Ages, led, through the forgeries of Chatterton and the epic chants of the pseudo-Ossian, to Scott, for whom it was reserved to create the life of the past on a vast scale, and with an unparalleled illusion of truth.

Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh in 1771; his father was a lawyer, but was descended from a vigorous and warlike Border clan. Scott developed early a passion for the ballad minstrelsy of his land; and he spent many days of his youth roaming over the country, gathering ballads and scraps of ballads from the lips of Lowland peasants. His collection was published under the title *Border Minstrelsy*. Except for a few ballads in the "grewsome" vein made popular by the "Lenore" of Bürger, the pioneer of German romanticism, Scott wrote no original poetry until his thirty-fourth year. In 1805 appeared *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, in which a thread of "gothic" supernaturalism is woven into a tale of Scotch border life in the Middle Ages. This was followed in 1808 by *Marmion*. *Marmion* exhibited in much greater measure the brilliant descriptive color, the swift and powerful narrative movement, and the ringing, energetic music, which had made the Lay instantly popular; and it showed a great advance over the earlier poem in life-likeness and breadth. Scarcely more than a year later appeared *The Lady of the Lake*, a story softer and more idyllic than *Marmion*, yet not lacking in wild and stirring episodes; in it Scott came far nearer than he had done in his earlier poems, to the broad imaginative handling of mediæval Scotch life which he afterward gave in his prose romances.

Scott's Career as a Poet.

These three poems, presenting many of the new romantic motives in popularly attractive form, took the reading world by storm. The diction employed in them was not, like the language of Coleridge and Wordsworth, so startlingly novel as a literary medium that it repelled the unaccustomed ear. The metre was strong and

Qualities of his Poetry.

buoyant, appealing powerfully to a public weary of the monotonous couplets of the preceding age, but unable to appreciate the delicate melodies of the *Songs of Innocence and Experience* and the *Lyrical Ballads*. The romantic scenery, brightly and firmly painted, but always kept subordinate to the action; the character delineation, picturesque but not subtle; and the vigorous sweep of the story,—all appealed to the popular heart. Scott himself described the peculiar excellence of his poetry truly enough, though with characteristic modesty, as consisting in a "hurried frankness of composition which pleases soldiers, sailors, and young people of bold and active disposition."

Scott's metrical tales did much to popularize romanticism in its broader phases. He was, however, not much in earnest as a poet; and when the public turned to the more lurid and extravagant verse-tales of Byron, Scott cheerfully resigned his place to the younger man, and began his far greater work in prose (see page 357).

The popular triumph of romanticism was also aided by another Scotch poet, Thomas Campbell (1777–1844). He began his career as a follower of the Augustans, and was known during his university career as the "Pope of Glasgow." In Germany, where he went in 1799, he fell under the influence of Bürger and the other early German romanticists; and in 1803 he published a volume of poems in the new manner, among which "Lochiel," "Hohenlinden," and "The Exile of Erin," attained and have held a great popular esteem. Afterward he published his famous war-odes, "The Battle of the Baltic" and "Ye Mariners of England." These splendid battle-chants, full of martial energy and kindling enthusiasm, rank with the best war-poetry of England, and are worthy of the race which holds the dominion of the sea.

Campbell.

The group of poets who came to manhood when the French Revolution was at its height, reacted during the Napoleonic wars into settled conservatism. Scott, in-

deed, by the accident of his early surroundings, was conservative from the first. Southey and Coleridge, after their youthful enthusiasm for a new utopian scheme of society, took refuge, the one in political Toryism, the other in the mystical pedantries of German philosophy. Wordsworth, who had felt the storm and stress of revolutionary ideas more than any of the others, after a long period of wavering and disappointment finally intrenched himself behind the institutions of church and state as he found them, and in that safe position proceeded with his real task of discovering new sources of joy and power for the individual life, in love of nature and in moral conduct. The two poets whom we now approach, Byron and Shelley, took up the torch of revolution which had been kindled in France during their childhood, and carried it flaming into new regions of thought and feeling.

Conservatism of Scott and the Lake Poets.

Radicalism of Byron and Shelley.

George Gordon, Lord Byron, was born in 1788, of a family of noblemen notorious for their pride and their passionate temper. He was of extraordinary physical beauty, and a lameness of one foot added to this a touch of pathos. Personal fascination was his from the first. He mastered his little world of school-fellows at Harrow with the same enthralling power of personality which later took captive the imagination of Europe. His first volume of poems, *Hours of Idleness* (1807), was faithful to the school of Pope, a poet for whom Byron throughout his life professed an unswerving admiration. The immature little book was mercilessly ridiculed in the Edinburgh Review. Byron nursed his revenge, and in 1809 he published a vigorous satiric onslaught upon his critics, entitled *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. It is significant that his first signal performance should have been conceived in a satiric vein, and educed by a blow to his personal pride.

Byron's Life and Writings.

Two years later the young poet set off upon his travels.

Not content with the conventional "grand tour," he pushed on into Albania, Greece, and the islands of the Ægean; dining in the tents of robber chieftains, rescuing distressed beauties from death at the hand of harem slaves, and doing many other romantic things. The public, at any rate, was eager to ascribe all these adventures to him, incited thereto by the lurid verse-romances, *The Giaour* (1813), *The Corsair* (1814), and others, which he now poured out with prodigal swiftness. These Eastern tales, crude and melodramatic as they were, appealed enormously to the popular taste, and quite eclipsed Scott's saner and healthier muse.

Byron's return to England and his marriage were quickly followed by a separation from his wife and by his final departure from his native country. The next years he spent in Switzerland and Italy, part of the time in company with Shelley. To this period belong his most important works, the later cantos of *Childe Harold* (1816–1818), the dramas *Manfred* (1817) and *Cain* (1821), and his satiric masterpiece, *Don Juan* (1819–1824). The romance of his life was crowned by a romantic and generous death. In 1824 he went to Greece, to put himself at the head of the revolutionary forces gathered to liberate that country from the tyranny of the Sultan. He was seized with fever in the swamps of Missolonghi, and died before he had had time to prove his ability as a leader.

The Eastern Tales.

In his Eastern tales and his dramas, Byron presents under many names one hero—himself, or rather an exaggerated shadow of one side of himself. The Conrads and Laras of the tales are all proud and lonely souls in revolt; mysteriously wicked, infernally proud, quixotically generous, and above all melancholy. In *Manfred* and *Cain* these crude outlines became imposing silhouettes, thrown out sharply against a background half-real and half-supernatural. The scene of *Manfred* is laid in the high Alps, where the hero lives in his castle in

gloomy and bitter isolation, communing with unearthly powers, and scornfully working out his dark fate. *Cain*, though imperfectly carried out, is superbly conceived. The earthly rebel and first shedder of human blood, under the guidance of Lucifer, the rebel angel, visits Hell and Chaos, and there finds grounds for the godless hatred that is in him. It was by these plays, from one point of view truly terrible, that Byron earned his title as founder and chief exemplar of the "Satanic school" of poetry. They are perhaps the most uncompromising expression of individualism, and the most thorough-going negation of the social ideal, to be found in our literature. Their popularity, which was instant and enormous, was largely due to historical causes. The French Revolution, the most daring reach which the human race has ever made after an ideal social state, had failed. Europe, under the rule of Metternich, had swung back from its eager dreams of freedom and fraternity into a gloomy mood, in which the still potent spirit of rebellion became personal, self-centred, and anti-social. Byron represented and justified to the European mind this recoil, and Byronism became a passion, a disease.

The Dramas: Reasons for their Popularity.

Childe Harold presents the Byronic hero in a more elegiac mood, as a pensive wanderer through Europe and the East. It is not until the later cantos that the verse rises into real magnificence. Among the lakes and mountain solitudes of Switzerland, the decaying glories of Venice, and the imperial ruins of Rome, the poet's imagination is genuinely kindled, and the passages which celebrate these scenes are among the triumphs of descriptive poetry in our language. Byron paints his pictures in free, bold strokes, and with a pomp of rhetoric well suited to his grandiose subjects. He makes up in broad impressiveness what he lacks in subtlety. His music, too, is loud and sonorous; without the heartfelt, searching beauty of greater melodists,

Byron as a Descriptive Poet: "Childe Harold."

but with an orchestral sweep and volume appropriate to the theme.

In *Don Juan*, however, Byron first found his genuine voice, and it proved to be neither dramatic nor lyric, but satiric. *Don Juan* is a comprehensive satire upon modern society. The hero is a Castilian youth, a light-hearted, irresponsible pagan creature, who wanders through Turkey, Russia, and England, meeting all sorts of adventures, particularly such as are calculated to shock the moral sense, and to exhibit the social corruption hidden under the conventional veneer. The poem was, in effect, a long peal of scornful laughter flung at British cant, at that famous British cant which Byron declared was in his day the "primum mobile" of his countrymen's life, both national and private. In his more serious work, Byron is fatally subject to anti-climax. His imagination and his power of phrase are apt to fail him just when they are needed most. In *Don Juan* he turned this defect into a piquant virtue, by deliberately cultivating anti-climax for satiric ends. He drops with startling suddenness from the serious to the trivial, from impassioned poetry to mocking prose. The device is a simple one, but Byron uses it with a variety and zest truly wonderful, and secures by means of it an effect of cynical nonchalance which is a triumph of its kind.

Byron as a Satirist: "Don Juan."

Byron's was a personality of immense force. To his age he was a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, but one which led only into deeper deserts of unfaith and negation. Such work as he had to do was a work of destruction; the age cried out for it, and he did it thoroughly. Of the higher powers of poetry he possessed few, and for them he cared little. He was a careless and hasty worker. In his own words, if he missed his first spring he went growling back to his jungle. That he was a great writer, one of the greatest, is as certain as

that neither by the soul nor the body of his art can he take rank with the small company of supreme poets.

Shelley's Life and Poetic Development.

Among that company, a presence so bright and strange as to seem in truth one of those "spirits from beyond the moon" of whom he sang, Percy Bysshe Shelley holds a place. He was born in 1792, just when the eyes of all Europe were fixed in hope and fear upon France, and the stars fought in their courses for the triumph of a new order. At Eton, among the tyrannies and conventions of a great public school, his sensitive nature was thrown into a fever of rebellion from which he never quite worked out into spiritual sanity and health. "Mad Shelley," his schoolmates called him, and in the judgment of the world he remained "mad Shelley" to the end of his life. At Oxford, whither he proceeded in 1810, he read the sceptical French philosophers, and deemed it his duty to publish his religious views in a pamphlet entitled "The Necessity of Atheism," for which he was expelled. An ill-starred marriage with Harriet Westbrook followed, and after that came a quixotic attempt to arouse Ireland to seek redress for her national wrongs. The young couple carried on their mission by throwing from the windows of their lodging in Dublin, copies of Shelley's *Address to the Irish People*, "to every passer-by who seemed likely." They continued the campaign later in Wales, by setting tracts adrift in the sea in sealed bottles, or sending them down the wind in little fire-balloons. The curious mixture in Shelley of the real and the unreal is sharply brought out by the fact that the writings thus fantastically put in circulation are often of grave and simple eloquence, wise in counsel and temperate in tone, and that most of the reforms which they advocate have since been enacted into law.

An acquaintance with William Godwin, the revolutionary philosopher and novelist, author of *Political Justice* and *Caleb Williams*, led Shelley to write *Queen Mab*, a

crude poem attacking dogmatic religion and the social state. The scandal which it created was soon increased by Shelley's separation from Harriet Westbrook, his alliance with Godwin's daughter Mary, and the departure of the couple from England into lasting exile. Before this, in 1816, he had produced "Alastor," a blank verse narrative full of wonderful dream-pictures of earth and sea and sky, written in pulsing and sweeping rhythms. "Alastor" showed that Shelley had passed his apprenticeship and had become a master in his art. In Italy, his powers developed rapidly. At Rome, amid the tangle of flowers and vines which at that time covered the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, he wrote his lyrical drama, *Prometheus Unbound.* The same year (1819) he finished *The Cenci,* a drama intended for the stage, and written in much more simple and everyday language than his other works. The short remainder of his life is marked by many great poems, some of considerable length, like the "Sensitive Plant" and "Adonais"; others shorter, among them the wonderful "Ode to the West Wind," and the best known of all Shelley's lyrics, the "Skylark." In 1821 the poet was drowned, while sailing off Leghorn, in one of those swift storms which sweep the Mediterranean during the summer heats. His body was burned on the beach, and his ashes were placed in the Protestant cemetery at Rome, near the grave where, a few months before, Keats had been laid.

Shelley's most characteristic work, both in thought and style, is *Prometheus Unbound.* The subject was suggested by a lost drama of Æschylus, in which Prometheus, the heroic friend and lover of mankind, was unchained from a bleak precipice where the tyrant Zeus had hung him. In Shelley's treatment Prometheus represents, not a superhuman helper of mankind, but Mankind itself, heroic, just, gentle, sacredly thirsting after liberty and spiritual gladness, but chained and tortured by the ruler of Heaven.

His Most Characteristic Work "Prometheus Unbound."

In the fulness of time Demogorgon (Necessity) hurls the tyrant from his throne; and Prometheus, amid the songs of Earth and the Moon, is united to Asia, the spirit of love in Nature. Here as elsewhere, Shelley shows himself a child of the French Revolution, in believing that it is only some external tyranny,—the might of priests and kings, the weight of "custom," the dark dreams of superstition,—which keeps mankind from rising to his ideal stature. But if the philosophy of *Prometheus* is immature, and tinged with the popular misconceptions of the time, the nobility of its mood, the heroic enthusiasm which it voices, make it eternally inspiring. And for its spirit of sacred passion the verse of the poem is a glorious vesture. The unearthly beauty of its imagery, the keen ethereal music of its songs and choruses, make this not only Shelley's highest achievement, but a fixed star in the firmament of poetry.

His Lyrical Genius.

It is in its lyrics that *Prometheus* reaches its greatest altitudes, for Shelley's genius was essentially lyrical. In all his best songs and odes, the words seem to be moved into their places in response to some hidden tune, wayward and strange in its movement, but always rounding into a perfect whole. Such a poem as that beginning "Swiftly walk over the western wave" marks perhaps the extreme limit of the romantic divergence from eighteenth century strictness of form; but it obeys a higher law than that of regularity, and with all its waywardness it is as perfect in shape as a flower. The rhythmical structure of the "West Wind" should be studied as a typical example of Shelley's power to make the movement of verse embody its mood. In this ode, the impetuous sweep and tireless overflow of the *terza rima*,* ending after each twelfth line in a couplet, suggests with wonderful truth the streaming and volleying of the wind, interrupted now and then by a sudden lull. Likewise in

* Ten-syllable lines rhyming a b a, c b c, d c d, etc.

the "Skylark," the fluttering lift of the bird's movement, the airy ecstasy and rippling gush of its song, are mirrored in the rhythm, in a thousand subtly varying effects.

His "Myth-making" Power.

Another main peculiarity of Shelley as a poet is what may be called his "myth-making" power. His poetry is full of "personifications" which, although in origin not different from those which fill eighteenth century poetry with dead abstractions like "smiling Hope" and "ruddy Cheer," are imagined with such power that they become real spiritual presences, inspiring wonder and awe. Such are the "Spirits of the Hours" in *Prometheus*, such is the spirit of the west-wind in the ode just mentioned, the latter a sublime piece of myth-making. It is in "Adonais," however, that this quality is perhaps best exhibited. To mourn over the dead body of Keats, in whose memory the elegy was written, there gather Splendors and Glooms, grief-clad Morning and wailing Spring, desolate Hours, winged Persuasions and veiled Destinies, and the lovely dreams which were the exhalation of the poet's spirit, in life. It would be hard to find a more signal instance than these "personifications" afford, of the way in which a great poet can revivify an outworn and discredited poetic tradition. The elegy is of all Shelley's poems the one which would most have satisfied Keats's own jealous artistic sense. It is to be grouped with Milton's *Lycidas*, Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, and Arnold's *Thyrsis* as one of the four supreme threnodies * in English verse.

His "Unreality."

Shelley deals less with actualities than does any other English poet. His imagery is that of a dream world, peopled by ethereal formsand bathed in prismatic light. Even when he borrows imagery from nature, it is from a nature heightened and rarefied by passage through his own temperament. He is at the other pole from

* Threnody, from two Greek words signifying "tear" and "song," *i.e.*, a song of grief for the dead.

Wordsworth's homeliness and large acceptance of Nature as she is. Hence an air of unreality rests over all Shelley's work, an unreality made more conspicuous by his unpractical theories of conduct and of society. Matthew Arnold called him "a beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain." But beauty such as Shelley's verse embodies cannot be ineffectual; and his passionate plea for freedom, for justice, and for loving-kindness, has never ceased to be potent in the deepening earnestness of this century's search after social betterment.

Revival of National Sentiment.

One effect of the revolutionary excitement of the age, and of the political agitation which it engendered, was to revive the sentiment of nationality, which had lost during the eighteenth century the lyric ardor given to it during the reign of Elizabeth. In Wordsworth's sonnets on national crises during the Napoleonic wars, and in Campbell's odes, this new national sentiment was expressed for England. In Scott's poems and novels it was expressed—in a broader, less political way—for Scotland. Ireland found a champion for her immemorial wrongs, and a reflection of her national peculiarities of temperament, in Thomas Moore (1779–1852), the biographer and intimate friend of Byron. Moore's *Irish Melodies*, of which, beginning in 1807, he wrote an immense number, include a score or so really beautiful lyrics, where the bright fancy and vague elusive melancholy of the Celtic nature find fit expression. Like the Elizabethan lyrists, Moore wrote for music, much of it of his own composing. His oriental tales, of which *Lalla Rookh* (1817) is the best known, are as artificial in their candied sweetness and tinsel decoration, as the Irish Melodies are, when at their best, genuine.

Moore.

A link between the revolutionary poets, deeply imbued with the agitation of their time, and Keats, in whose work the "time-spirit" counts for almost nothing, is furnished by Leigh Hunt (1784–1859). He was intimate with both

Byron and Shelley, and shared their radicalism. In 1812 he was imprisoned for criticising the Prince Regent; and during his imprisonment he made an exhaustive study of the Italian poets, especially Ariosto; the chief fruit of this study in his own work was a narrative poem entitled "Francesca da Rimini," suggested by Dante's account of the lovers Paolo and Francesca, in his *Inferno*. Leigh Hunt's poem influenced both Shelley and Keats, the former in "Julian and Maddalo," the latter in "Lamia." Hunt wrote a vast amount of critical and miscellaneous prose, among which his essays upon actors and acting are of especial interest. At least one of his shorter poems, "Abou Ben Adhem," has remained popular.

Leigh Hunt.

It was through Leigh Hunt that Keats, his friend and for a time his disciple, was led to the study of the Italians, from whom he derived, as Chaucer, Spenser, and Milton had done before him, a richness of tone and a glow of color that he could hardly otherwise have attained. The Romantic movement has been called a "second Renaissance;" and it is a striking fact that the two great sources of literary inspiration in the Renaissance, classical and Italian poetry, furnished to the later group of romantic poets invaluable aid. Byron and Shelley did their best work under Italian stimulus, supplemented in Shelley's case by the influence of Plato and the Greek dramatists. Keats formed his manner in the first place upon the Italian poets, and upon their greatest English imitator, Spenser; and in the old Greek myths he found the chief food for his imagination. Later, he supplemented his training with a study of the Elizabethan dramatists and of Milton, in all of whom the Italian element is strong.

Romantic Movement a "Second Renaissance."

John Keats was born in 1795, the son of a livery-stable keeper. He was apprenticed at fifteen to learn surgery, but he broke his indentures, and after walking the hospitals in

London for a time, he gave up the medical profession. The passion for poetry, which was to be, during the brief remainder of his life, a consuming ardor, had already been kindled in him. Leigh Hunt introduced him to a literary circle where his dawning talents found encouragement. In 1817 he published a little volume of verse, most of it crude and immature enough, but showing in many places a nascent mastery of style, and containing the magnificent sonnet "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," perhaps Keats's most perfect achievement in the sonnet form. From the first, his imagination had turned to the old Greek world with instinctive sympathy; and he now chose as the subject for a long narrative poem the story of Endymion, the Latmian shepherd beloved by the moon-goddess. *Endymion* was published in 1818. The exordium of the poem, the Hymn to Pan in the opening episode, and a myriad other lines and short passages, are worthy of the Keats that was to be; but as a whole *Endymion* is chaotic, and cloyed with ornament. Nobody knew this better than Keats himself, as is testified to both by his letters and by the proudly humble preface in which he describes the poem as a "feverish attempt rather than a deed accomplished," and hopes that "while it is dwindling I may be plotting and fitting myself for verses fit to live."

Keats: His Life and Poetic Development.

To what purpose he plotted, the wonderful volume published two years later, in 1820, shows. It was entitled *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and other Poems;* besides the pieces named, it contained the great odes, "On Melancholy," "On a Grecian Urn," "To Psyche," and "To a Nightingale," and the heroic fragment, "Hyperion." Two years had done wonders in deepening and strengthening his gift. In turning from Spenser and Ariosto to the great masculine poets of the seventeenth century, Shakespeare, Webster, Milton, and Dryden, he had found the iron which was lacking in his earlier intel-

lectual food, and had learned the lessons of artistic calmness and severity, without sacrifice of the mellow sweetness native to him; to charm he had added strength.

Before the 1820 volume was published, Keats was attacked by consumption, and had warning that another winter in England would prove fatal. In September of that year he sailed for Italy under the care of his faithful friend Joseph Severn. Early in the spring of 1821 he died in Rome, and was buried in the Protestant cemetery by the Aurelian wall, where Shelley, also, was soon to be laid. On his tomb are carved, according to his own request, the words, "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." In a hopefuller time and in a mood of noble simplicity, he had said, "I think I shall be among the English poets after my death."

The essential quality of Keats as a poet is his sensitiveness to beauty, and the singleness of aim with which he seeks for "the principle of beauty in all things." He worships beauty for beauty's sake, with none of the secondary moral intentions of Milton, Wordsworth, and Shelley, but with the unreasoning rapture of a lover or a devotee. In his first volume he tells of the "dizzy pain" which the sight of the Elgin marbles gave him, of the "indescribable feud" which they "brought round his heart." He opens his second volume with the memorable line, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever;" and in his last volume, at the close of the ode "On a Grecian Urn," he declares that beauty is one with truth. In this last instance he attempts for once to rationalize his instinctive devotion; but it is as an overmastering instinct, not as a philosophic conception, that we find the worship of beauty everywhere operative in his work.

His Worship of Beauty.

It is this passion for beauty, working through an æsthetic organism of extraordinary delicacy and power, which gives to Keats's poetry its sensuous richness, and which makes it play magically upon all the senses of the reader.

The pure glow of his color reminds us of the Italian painter Giorgione; and the music of his best verse has a wonderful mellowness and depth, as if blown softly through golden trumpets. In the early poems the richness is indeed too great, the ornament excessive; but this is merely the eager lavishness of youth rejoicing in its abundance, and not yet disciplined into good taste. From the first, his poetry has extraordinary freshness, energy, gusto. His use of words is, even in his earliest volume, wonderfully fresh. He revived old words, coined new ones, and put current ones to a new service, with a confidence and success unequalled by any other English poets except Chaucer, Shakespeare, and perhaps Spenser.

Qualities of his Poetry.

The sense of form, which is so conspicuous in Keats's later work, was a matter of growth with him. Endymion is formless, a labyrinth of flowery paths which lead nowhere. But the great odes, especially the "Nightingale" and the "Grecian Urn," and the later narrative poems, the "Eve of St. Agnes" and "Lamia," have a wonderful perfection of form, a subordination of part to part in the building up of a beautiful whole, which is the sign of the master-workman. This is particularly true of "St. Agnes' Eve," that latest and perhaps most perfect flowering of the old Spenserian tree. The story of Madeline's dream on the haunted eve, of its magical fulfilment through young Porphyro's coming, and of their flight from the castle, is set in a framework of storm and cold, of dreary penance and spectral old age, of barbarous revelry and rude primeval passion, which by a series of subtle and thrilling contrasts marvellously heightens the warm and tender radiance of the central picture; then, when the illusion of reality is at the height, the whole thing is thrown back into the dim and doubtful past by the words

His Sense of Form.

> And they are gone; ay, ages long ago
> These lovers fled away into the storm.

Keats's strength, which we see in "The Eve of St. Agnes," "Lamia," and the Odes, working in the service of perfect grace, tempted him in "Hyperion" to attack a theme of the largest epic dimensions, the overthrow of the old Titan sun-deity Hyperion, by the new sun-god Apollo. The subject proved too large for his undeveloped powers, and he threw it aside, on the ground that there were "too many Miltonic inversions in it." Probably the deeper reason was that he felt as yet unequal to the task of imposing form upon his stupendous matter, and his artistic sense would no longer permit him to be content with formlessness. As the poem stands it is a superb fragment, an august portal to a temple which will never be built.

Although the body of Keats's work lies remote from everyday human interest, it is a serious mistake to think of him as indifferent to human affairs, or in any sense effeminate. His wonderful letters, with their rollicking fun, their quick human sympathy and solicitude, their eager ponderings upon life and clear insight into many of its dark places, show a nature vitalized at every point, and keenly alert to reality. Through many of his later poems, especially the great odes, breathes a poignant human undertone, which suggests that if he had lived he might have turned more and more to themes of common human experience. Dying as he did at twenty-five, after only three or four years of opportunity, he yet left behind him a body of poetry which is in its kind unexcelled, and which has had a more profound influence than any other upon subsequent verse. From the youthful work of Tennyson and Browning down to the present day, the poetry of the Victorian age has been deeply affected in form and color by Keats's fascinating example.

His Humanity.

His Influence.

His importance in the romantic development which we have been tracing is twofold. In the first place, no one in the line of his predecessors had been endowed as was

he to taste of all earthly delights, to "burst joy's grape against his palate fine"; and to convey into verse the wealth of his sensations. By describing life as it came to him through his temperament, a temperament most rich and delicate yet most robust, he greatly widened the sensuous realm of poetry. In the second place he greatly enriched the texture of verse—its diction and melody—by importing into it new elements from Italian and Elizabethan poetry. In reclaiming the lost secrets of Renaissance verse, he did consummately what Thomson, Collins, Gray, and Blake had done falteringly.

His Place in the Romantic Movement.

The Elizabethan revival, of which the poetic results are seen in Keats, was in large part due to a group of prose-writers who carried over into the realm of criticism the wider sympathies, both literary and human, accompanying the romantic movement. Coleridge, after his power as a poet was gone, contributed much, in his *Biographia Literaria* and in his lectures on Shakespeare, to broaden the basis of criticism, and to substitute for the narrow canons of Dr. Johnson and the eighteenth century literary doctrinaires, a more humane and sympathetic appreciation. Leigh Hunt wrote voluminously for more than thirty years with the same end in view. William Hazlitt (1778–1830), in a series of brilliant essays and lectures, illustrated the new impulse to regard literature from the romantic point of view, to approach it with personal enthusiasm and with hospitality to widely different types of genius. Hazlitt humanized literary criticism by infusing into it an autobiographic element; by making it, in other words, a kind of romance of adventure in the world of books. He also connected it with the criticism of life and manners, and with the larger questions of philosophy, in a way which has been fruitful of suggestion to later critics. The romantic quality of Hazlitt's style may

The New Romantic Criticism.

Hazlitt.

be illustrated by a bit of eulogy which occurs in his Lectures on the Literature of the Age of Elizabeth. Of Sir Thomas Browne's imagination he says :—"He turns the world round for his amusement, as if it were a globe of pasteboard. The orbits of the heavenly bodies or the history of empires are to him but a point in time or a speck in the universe. . . He scoops an antithesis out of fabulous antiquity, and rakes up an epithet from the sweepings of chaos. . . The categories * hang about his neck like the gold chain of knighthood, and he walks gowned in the intricate folds and swelling draperies of dark sayings and impenetrable riddles."

Besides Hazlitt, the leading exponents of the romantic school of criticism were Charles Lamb and Thomas De Quincey. Lamb was a pioneer in the Elizabethan revival, and De Quincey was one of the earliest champions of the Lake school of poetry. Both of these writers united the criticism of literature with the criticism of life, and it is in the latter province that their most important work was done.

Charles Lamb was born in London in 1775, and was brought up within the precincts of the ancient law-courts, his father being a servant to an advocate of the Inner Temple. From the cloisters of the Temple he was sent to the cloisters of Christ's Hospital, where he had for a classmate Coleridge, his lifelong friend.† At seventeen he became a clerk in the India House, and here he spent the working hours of the next thirty-three years, until he was retired on a pension in 1825.‡ His lifelong devotion to his sister Mary, upon whom rested an hereditary taint of insanity, has done almost as much as the

Lamb.

* Space, Time, etc., are known in philosophy as the "categories" of thought.

† See Lamb's "Recollections of Christ's Hospital" and "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago," in the Essays of Elia.

‡ See Elia Essay, The Superannuated Man.

sweetness and gentle humor of his writings to endear his name. He died in 1834, his sister outliving him and gradually sinking into that mental darkness from which his patience and tenderness had upheld her.

Lamb's first successful literary venture was his *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807), written in collaboration with his sister, and intended for children. The fineness of Lamb's critical gift, which was at least suggested in these rewordings of Shakespeare's plots, was brilliantly illustrated a year later by his *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets,* with critical comments. His reading in the Elizabethan drama was extensive, his appreciation of its qualities subtle and penetrating, and his enthusiasm for it unbounded. The book did much to revive the almost extinguished fame of the lesser dramatists grouped about Shakespeare. It is one of the earliest, as well as one of the most significant products of the new romantic criticism.

His Literary Criticism.

But it was not as a critic of literature, but as a commentator upon life, as a gentle egoist, without a trace of vanity or self-assertion, recording his moods, his memories, his witty and tender observations, that Lamb was to fulfil his peculiar literary destiny. The *Essays of Elia,** published at intervals in the *London Magazine,* were at length gathered together and republished in two series, the first in 1823, the second ten years later. They established Lamb in the title which he still holds, that of the most delightful of English essayists. They cover a great variety of topics, but the approach to the subject is always a personal one; and it is this intimate quality, communicating to us by some intangible suggestion the author's odd and lovable personality, which constitutes their chief charm. Many of them are confessions

"Essays of Elia."

*The pseudonym Elia was borrowed by Lamb from an Italian clerk in the South Sea House, named Ellia. The change of spelling has led to the broadening of the initial letter in pronunciation.

of personal prejudice, such as the essay entitled "Imperfect Sympathies," where Lamb's dislike of Scotchmen and his taste for Quakers is made matter of delicious mirth. In "Old China" Lamb gives a winning picture of his home life with his sister, who appears here and elsewhere as "cousin Bridget." In "Dream Children," a beautiful and deeply affecting essay, he talks with two children conjured from nothingness to solace for an hour his lonely hearth. To turn from an essay like this to the famous extravaganza entitled "A Dissertation on Roast Pig," is to sound the full gamut of Lamb's pathos and humor.

Their Matter.

The style of these essays is curiously compounded of elements borrowed from older writers, especially from Burton and Sir Thomas Browne. But in passing through Lamb's temperament these elements are fused into a style wholly new and individual, betraying its remote origin only by a certain rareness and charming quaintness of flavor. The Elia papers continue the traditions of essay writing fixed by Addison and Steele, but their range is wider, and their treatment of human life is marked by the more searching pathos, the more sensitive and flashing humor, which belonged to Lamb as a partaker in the spiritual awakening of the nineteenth century.

Their Style.

The romantic tinge of Lamb's mind is the more noteworthy, because, like the eighteenth century men from whom he borrowed the idea of the essay, he cared little for natural beauty, and was essentially an urban spirit. London, its streets, its shops, its theatres, was the place of his affection, and he has pictured many of the phases of its life with the vividness that comes from personal delight. In him we see, in a very curious and striking way, the increment of romantic sensibility infused into and transforming a nature belonging in many respects to the age of the Queen Anne wits.

In Thomas De Quincey the romantic element is more

pronounced, and displays itself not only in his writings, but in the circumstances of his life. He was born in Manchester in 1785, the son of a prosperous merchant in the foreign trade. At sixteen he ran away from the Manchester grammar-school, and spent a summer wandering in North Wales, often sleeping on the open hills or in the tents of gypsies. When the cold weather came on, he made his way to London, where he led a starved and vagrant existence, until he was reclaimed by his family and sent to Oxford. He was one of the earliest converts to the "Lake poetry," and after leaving college he established himself at Grasmere, in the neighborhood of Wordsworth and Southey. Here he lived for more than twenty years, reading prodigiously and eating vast quantities of opium. By reason of some peculiarity of his constitution the drug was less fatal in its workings than is commonly the case; but the splendid and tumultuous dreams which it brought were paid for by periods of awful gloom and lassitude. In his thirty-first year De Quincey married. Forced to earn money by his pen, he published in 1821–1822 the famous *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater,* and from this time forth he poured out magazine articles on almost every conceivable topic. In 1830 he removed, with his wife and children, to Edinburgh, where he resided until his death in 1859.

De Quincey.

His best-known work is also his most characteristic, the *Opium-Eater* and its sequel *Suspiria de Profundis.* Only a small portion of the *Opium-Eater* deals with the subject of opium-taking. It is an extended autobiography, covering the life of the author from early childhood to about the year 1819, when his bondage to opium became absolute, and he descended into the valley of the shadow where he was to gather the dolorous matter of his *Suspiria.* The most powerful portion of the narrative, aside from the description of his opium-sensations, is that which tells of his life of vagrancy and

"Confessions of an Opium-Eater."

starvation in London, and of his nightly wanderings with "poor Ann" through the crowded desolation of Oxford street. The *Suspiria de Profundis* (Sighs from the Depths) is made up mainly of dream-phantasies transcribed from the actual wanderings of his mind under the spell of opium, or suggested by them.

His Characteristic Style.

In such phantasmagoric imaginings as "Levana and Our Ladies of Sorrow," in the *Suspiria*, and the "Dream-Fugue" appended to the *English Mail-Coach*, De Quincey ventured upon a new domain of imaginative prose; a region audaciously won from verse, to which, by virtue of its impassioned and ideal character, it properly belongs. His studies of Elizabethan prose-writers may have given him the hint; but he carried out as a deliberate experiment what with them had been an unconscious confusion of the categories of prose and verse. In doing so, he revealed new possibilities in the English tongue. The following passage from the *Opium-Eater* will illustrate the poetical quality of his style. It describes a series of dreams suggested by the sight of a mysterious Malay, who appeared one day at De Quincey's door:—"I brought together all creatures, birds, beasts, reptiles, that are found in all tropical regions. . . I was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by paroquets, by cockatoos. I ran into pagodas, and was fixed for centuries at the summit, or in secret rooms; I was the idol; I was the priest; I was worshipped; I was sacrificed. I fled from the wrath of Brama through all the forests of Asia; Vishnu hated me; Seeva lay in wait for me. I came suddenly upon Isis and Osiris: I had done a deed, they said, which the ibis and the crocodile trembled at. Thousands of years I lived and was buried in stone coffins, with mummies and sphinxes, in narrow chambers at the heart of eternal pyramids. I was kissed, with cancerous kisses, by crocodiles, and was laid, confounded with all unutterable abortions, amongst reeds and Nilotic mud." Upon this

and similar passages of richly wrought, fantastically colored, chanting prose, De Quincey's fame as a writer rests. The qualities of style exhibited in them have had a great influence upon the prose writing of the century, an influence which can be traced in such widely different writers as Bulwer and Ruskin.

His Defects as a Writer.

Two serious charges are to be brought against De Quincey as a writer,—diffuseness and triviality. He cannot resist the slightest temptation to digress, and even in the most solemn pages of his Confessions, and in the midst of the touching story of Joan of Arc's childhood, he is capable of falling into a queer kind of "rigmarole" made up of pedantry and mirthless jesting. In reading him we are often visited by an uncomfortable sense of dealing with a nature not quite responsible and not quite human. He illustrates both the defects and the virtues of the romantic temper; its virtues in the enkindled splendor of his fancy and the impassioned sweep of his style; its defects in his extravagance, his unevenness, his failure to exercise adequate self-criticism.

Classical Reaction in Landor.

During the period of lull following the death of Byron and preceding the outburst of the new Victorian literature, a decided reaction from the romantic to the classic ideal is seen in Walter Savage Landor. In him this reaction is the more noteworthy because he began as a romantic poet of the extreme type, and wrote romantic dramas until a year or two before Byron's death; when he began to cultivate the classical, dignified, restrained prose for which his name is famous.

Landor's Life.

Landor's life was a very long one. Born in 1775, he published an important poem, *Gebir*, in 1798, a short while before the *Lyrical Ballads* of Wordsworth and Coleridge heralded the triumph of the romantic movement. *Gebir* is a fantastic narrative, conceived in a mood of wild romanticism such as only Shelley

could rival; upon Shelley, indeed, the poem had a strong influence. If Landor had had, at this earlier period, greater artistic poise and sureness, *Gebir* and not the *Lyrical Ballads* might now be held to signalize the triumph of the new romantic poetry. But the poem is incoherent and immature, and in spite of many beauties, is a failure. It lies outside Landor's characteristic work, as do likewise the efforts which he made during the next twenty-five years in the romantic drama. It was not until his forty-sixth year that he found his genuine manner, and began to produce work of permanent beauty. In 1821 he went to Italy, and settled near Florence, on the slope of Fiesole, in a beautiful villa, the garden of which, full of clouds of olive-trees and spires of cypress, commanded a magnificent view of the valley of the Arno and the far-stretching hills of Tuscany. Here he wrote most of those lofty and serene works by which he will be remembered, especially the *Imaginary Conversations*, and *Pericles and Aspasia.*

The vitality of Landor's genius in old age is almost without parallel. At seventy he published a series of poems on subjects from old Greek life, which have all the freshness and spontaneous joy of youth. At least one of these, the "Hamadryad," should be read in connection with the loveliest of Landor's youthful lyrics, "Rose Aylmer," in order that the persistence of his freshness of feeling through a literary career of fifty years, may be appreciated. He died in 1864, long after his early contemporaries had passed away, and a new generation of writers had arisen, with new aims and ideals. His literary life covered the immense span from the earliest work of Wordsworth to the *Atlanta in Calydon* of Swinburne. His personal life, in curious contrast with the serenity and classic poise of his best work, was one of constant storm, of furious quarrels and eccentric outbursts of temper. There is something pathetic in the unconscious

irony of the opening line of the quatrain in which he took leave of earth:

> I strove with none, for none was worth my strife:
> Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art;
> I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
> It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

The "Imaginary Conversations."

In the *Imaginary Conversations*, Landor brings together significant personalities, from all lands and all periods of history, sometimes in couples, sometimes in larger groups, and represents them in talk with one another. The mediæval baron Leofric talks with his bride Godiva, as they ride into Coventry; Æsop, the Phrygian fable-writer, talks with Rhodope, a young Greek slave-girl, in the house of their Egyptian master; Henry the Eighth talks with Anne Boleyn in her prison; Dante talks with Beatrice in a Florentine garden in spring; the young Marcellus, wounded to death, confronts for a moment the conquering Hannibal. For the most part, the characters which Landor evokes are lofty and magnanimous ones; and the dialogue shows no attempt at dramatic realism, but is always stately, pure, and exquisitely finished. Nothing is allowed to interfere with the classical precision and chaste rhythmic beauty of the style. In a sense, all the characters of the Conversations talk alike, using a diction and idiom removed from the realities of daily speech, and suggesting their individuality only by the more subtle differences of their thought and action. There is a certain aloofness and austerity in Landor's manner which often repel the reader on first acquaintance, but which, when once accepted, rather add to than lessen his pleasure. The purpose which lurks behind the Conversations, too, is usually as nobly and calmly serious as the style. It is these three characteristics, loftiness of character, dignity of style, and nobility of purpose, which make the Im-

aginary Conversations classic, in the broader sense of the word; and which make them, after Milton's poetry, perhaps the best substitute afforded by English literature for a training in the Greek and Latin writers.

In *Pericles and Aspasia*, Landor substituted for the conversational manner, the epistolary. In a series of familiar letters passing between the major and the minor characters of the book, we are told how Aspasia, a young woman of Asia Minor, comes to Athens, then at the height of its splendor under the wise rule of Pericles; how she meets the great leader, and comes to know, on terms of intimate friendship, Alcibiades, Socrates, and many other famous men of the age. We are given thus, in a delightfully natural and casual way, a picture of the intellectual capital of the antique world in its heyday, a picture which makes the Athens of Pericles seem wonderfully near at hand and comprehensible. Aspasia, as she reveals herself in her letters, is a triumph of feminine portraiture. Her playfulness, her wit, her girlish adventurousness, her unpedantic delight in intellectual things, the womanly way in which her nature rises and sobers itself to meet the grave nature of Pericles, all combine harmoniously to make a woman such as Shakespeare might have created. *Pericles and Aspasia* is the work through which Landor can most profitably be approached. Its style has his characteristic elevation and serious beauty, united with more than his ordinary share of vivacity and tender grace.

"Pericles and Aspasia."

From the death of Byron in 1824 until the decisive appearance of Tennyson in 1842, there was a period of comparative exhaustion in English literature. Keats and Shelley were dead; Coleridge was lost in metaphysics, and Wordsworth had almost ceased to produce poetry of value; Scott died in 1832, and the best work of Lamb was done before that date. The first great wave of romanticism, which had begun to rise a century before, with Thomson and

Gray, and which had reached its height in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, had passed by. During this period of lull, the new forces which were to go to the making of literature during the reign of Victoria, were gathering head. Tennyson, Browning and Carlyle had already appeared; and, although they remained as yet comparatively obscure, they were doing some of their greatest work. Thomas Hood (1798–1845), in his "Bridge of Sighs" and "Song of the Shirt," had struck the note of humanitarian sympathy with the unfortunate and oppressed, which was to swell in volume and depth through the whole course of Victorian literature. We must now consider what other distinctive elements went to the making of that literature, gigantic in bulk and almost infinite in variety, which places the era of Victoria beside that of Elizabeth in literary importance.

Transition to the Victorian Era.

CHAPTER XIV

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: THE VICTORIAN ERA

THE literature of the long reign of Victoria (1837–1901), presents the features natural in an era of great social change and intellectual advancement. Never before, not even in the troubled seventeenth century, have there been such rapid and sweeping changes in the social fabric of the English-speaking races; and never before has literature been so closely in league, or so openly at war, with the forces of social life. Among the many circumstances making for change, the chief one has been the growth of democracy. The Reform Bill of 1832 placed the political power of England in the hands of the middle class, and since that date there has been a gradual extension of the suffrage to the working classes. With the growth of democracy has gone the spread of popular education, and a great increase in the number of readers of books. A vast body of people who heretofore have had little or no access to literature, have been reached by it, and have in turn influenced its character. Almost all the great Victorian writers have been absorbed in the attempt to move, instruct, or inspire the huge, unleavened mass of society. The astonishing development of the mechanical arts and of commerce, while it has increased the comforts of living, has led to an absorption in material interests against which nearly every great writer has lifted his voice in protest and warning. The discoveries of science have thrown into the world a multitude of conceptions of the most revolutionary kind, unsettling many of the old bases of belief, and affecting literature in numberless ways. Along with these causes of

General Characteristics of Victorian Literature.

change there has gone, also, a restless search after some new form of society, or some modification of the old forms, by which the claims of all men to life and opportunity should be met. Social unrest is the great distinguishing feature of the Victorian era; and the demand for social justice has colored, in one way or another, the whole thought of the time.

It follows from all this, that the most striking characteristic of Victorian literature is its strenuousness, its conscious purpose. Both poets and prose-writers have worked under the shadow and burden of a conscious social responsibility. Almost all of them have been makers of doctrine, preachers of some crusade, or physicians offering some cure for man's perplexities and despairs. Instead of the light-hearted interest in life which the Elizabethans show, instead of the transcendental dreaming of the generation of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats, we find as the prevailing mood an earnest and often troubled facing of the issues of life, which are recognized to be momentous.

Nevertheless, the romantic impulse persists. There are some minor reversions to classicism, but taken largely, literature has continued to be romantic, in the novelty and variety of its form, in its search after undiscovered springs of beauty and truth, in its emotional and imaginative intensity. In fact the whole literary effort of the Victorian age may be conceived of as an effort to open to the masses of men those sources of romantic feeling which in the early part of the century were known only to a few privileged souls.

At the threshold of the period, however, we find a writer concerning whom little of what has just been said is true; an unromantic, practical nature, who shows no trace of unrest and spiritual striving, but who is eminently satisfied with things as they are. Thomas Babington Macaulay was born in 1800, of Scotch and Quaker

ancestry. At Cambridge, in the midst of the political excitement which led up to the Reform Bill, he took a middle position between Tory and Radical, intrenching himself in the Whig principles of liberal conservatism, of which he was all his life a powerful and watchful champion. At college he distinguished himself as a writer and debater; and in 1825 his famous essay on Milton appeared in the Edinburgh Review, followed by other essays which fastened attention upon him as a new force in literature. At thirty he entered Parliament, in time to take a conspicuous part in the passage of the Reform Bill. Four years later he went to India as legal adviser to the Supreme Council, returning in 1838 to play once more a leading rôle in the Whig party, until its defeat in 1847. During these nine years appeared several of his most famous essays, notably those on the Indian proconsuls, Clive and Warren Hastings. In 1847 he published his *Lays of Ancient Rome*, dignified and vigorous celebrations, in ballad verse, of the antique civic virtues, as shown in Horatius, Virginius, and other Roman worthies. The next year, after long delay, he began to realize the dream of his life, in the publication of the first part of his *History of England*. He accomplished, in the five completed volumes of his history, only a fragment of the task which he had set himself. He died in 1859.

Macaulay.

Gladstone bears testimony that an announcement of Macaulay's intention to speak in Parliament was "like a trumpet call to fill the benches." His power as an orator furnishes the key to what is most characteristic in his essays. In a speech, the meaning must be so clearly stated, so aptly illustrated, so skilfully repeated and re-emphasized, that misunderstanding shall be impossible; and the flagging attention of the audience must be continually stimulated by strong contrasts, by striking antitheses, and by an illusion of rapidity, even where the movement is, by the necessity of the sub-

His Essays: their Style and Matter.

ject, slow. Suggestiveness, delicate shades of meaning, of a sort to make the hearer hesitate and ponder, defeat the ends of parliamentary discourse; high imaginativeness, strong appeal to the more mystical and spiritual sides of man's nature, are here out of place. Everything must be open, sensible, emphatic. In all these respects Macaulay's essays are true to the type of parliamentary speaking. Probably no writer has ever been more skilful than Macaulay in making his whole meaning clear; none more successful in keeping the reader's mind awake, and his sense of movement agreeably satisfied. But on the other hand few writers of equal power have been so unsuggestive, so devoid of spiritual elevation. He is always downright and positive, never in doubt, and never at a loss. Mystics like Plato, masters of pure thought like Bacon, complex religious natures like Dr. Johnson, fare badly at his hands. But his defects served him perhaps as much as his virtues, in his work of popularizing knowledge. From the stores of his capacious memory, one of the most marvellous on record, he presented in lucid and entertaining form a great mass of fact and opinion, the educative power of which was and still continues to be very great.

"History of England."

In his History he carried his popularizing zeal into a more difficult field, and scored even a more notable success. His aim was to write a history of England from the accession of James II. to the end of George IV.'s reign, in a manner so concrete, picturesque, and dramatic, that his narrative of actual events should have the fascination of romance; and, as he himself put the case, should have the power "to supersede the last fashionable novel upon the dressing-table of young ladies." The portion of the story which he lived to complete is, in fact, presented with a wealth and minuteness of detail concerning particular persons, places, and events, such as a writer of fiction uses to embody the creations of his fancy. We do not find in Macaulay a profound view of under-

lying causes, that large intellectual interpretation of events which constitutes the "philosophy of history;" but in recompense he gives us a fascinating story, a broad and luminous canvas covered with firmly delineated pictures, which change before our eyes into new groupings, and give place to other spectacles, as in a magic diorama.

Macaulay's essays were chiefly written between 1825 and 1840, in the period of lull which followed the romantic outburst of the early part of the century. In his materialistic view of life, as well as in his pointed, metallic style, he reflects the character of this period, when men were inclined to exchange the idealistic longings and aspirations of the previous era, for a satisfied acceptance of the practical benefits which commerce, liberal government, and the mechanical sciences were bringing to English life. "A half-acre in Middlesex," he says, "is better than a peerage in Utopia." Of the Crystal Palace exhibition, one of those great industrial fairs upon which this century has lavished so much effort, he can hardly find words to express his admiration. The spread of comfort and of material prosperity, constantly arouses him to eloquence. He flattered his age by his satisfaction with its practical achievements, and by his assurance that steam-engines and ballot boxes, for which it had a taste, were very good things indeed. But meanwhile another voice was raised, in fierce protest and warning. Thomas Carlyle, son of one of "the fighting masons of Ecclefechan," arose to scourge and lament over the age like a prophet of old Israel, bidding men ponder what their boasted progress was progress toward, and whether, in their zeal for worship of the steam-engine and the ballot box, they were not perchance bowing down to heathen idols, forgetting the God of the spirit.

His Unideal View of Life.

Carlyle was born in 1795, at Ecclefechan, a village of the Scotch lowlands. After graduating from the University of Edinburgh, he rejected the ministry, for which he had

been intended, and determined to be "a writer of books." In these early days of privation and loneliness, with dyspepsia "gnawing like a rat at the pit of his stomach," he fought the battle which he afterward described in *Sartor Resartus*. The "Everlasting No," the voice of unfaith denying God and the worth of life, he put from him; the "Everlasting Yea," the assurance that life could be made divine through labor and courage, he wrote on his banner, as he went forth to do battle against the selfishness and spiritual torpor of the age. Carlyle's *Life of Schiller* and his translations from the German got him a hearing with the publishers, but his earnings remained extremely small. After his marriage with Jane Welsh, they went to live at Craigenputtoch, a farm-house amid miles of high dreary moor, in a "solitude almost druidical." Here Carlyle passed six years (1828–1834). During this time he produced *Sartor Resartus*, the book in which he first developed his characteristic style and thought, and wrote several masterly essays, notably those on Burns and Dr. Johnson. In 1834, he came to London, taking the house in Cheyne Row, Chelsea, where he spent the long remainder of his life. In 1837 he published *The French Revolution*, which turned the tide of public favor toward him. For more than thirty years after this, he stood as teacher and preacher to the people of England and America, thundering above them wrath, warning, and exhortation. The most notable works of this long period were *Chartism* (1839), an anti-democratic deliverance on the labor questions then agitating England; *Heroes and Hero-worship* (1841), a great sermon on Veneration, exhorting the world to love, honor, and submit in childlike obedience to its heroic men, whether they appear as warrior, poet, or priest; *Cromwell* (1845), a study of one of Carlyle's typical heroes as king; *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850); the *Life of John Sterling*, a masterpiece of sympathetic biography; and the *History of Friedrich II.* (1858–1865), a

Carlyle: Life and Writings.

vast picture of the life and times of the founder of the Prussian empire. From 1865 until his death in 1881, the veneration in which Carlyle's name was held steadily increased, though other teachers were rising to take his place, and some of the dogmas for which he stood were being undermined by time and criticism.

Underlying Spirit of his Work.

The actual doctrines which Carlyle preached with such Hebraic intensity,—his "Gospel of Work," his political dogma of "Government by the Best" (instead of "government by the worst," as he held democracy to be), and all the other shibboleths of his unending warfare with his age—are of less moment than the spirit which broadly underlies his writing. This spirit may be defined as an intense moral indignation against whatever is weak, or false, or mechanical; an intense moral enthusiasm for whatever is sincere and heroically forceful. From this point of view his two typical books are *Sartor Resartus* and *Heroes and Hero-worship*. The first is an attack upon all those social shams and mechanisms which defeat the sincerity of life; the second is a pæan of praise for those chosen heroic spirits who join earnestness with power. Like Byron, Carlyle is in romantic revolt against convention; like Wordsworth and Shelley, though in a very different way from either, he seeks for some positive ideal upon which to construct a habitable moral world in place of the uninhabitable one he has striven to destroy. *Sartor Resartus*, which is both destructive and constructive, is pre-eminent in doctrinal interest among all his books. It is also extremely ingenious in plan, and is written with a wonderful mingling of wild sardonic humor, keen pathos, and an eloquence and imaginative elevation almost biblical.

"Sartor Resartus" means "the tailor re-tailored," and its theme is clothes. It purports to be the fragment of a great "clothes-philosophy," the life-work of an eccentric German scholar and recluse, Herr Diogenes Teufelsdröck.

This philosophy has been left in wild confusion, scribbled on scattered leaves, and stuffed helter-skelter into twelve bags signed with the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Carlyle represents himself merely as editor and commentator of this weltering mass of words, endeavoring desperately to extract order out of chaos, and to lighten a little, with much head-shaking and consternation, the dark and mystic abysses of the German professor's thought. This whimsical fancy of Carlyle's enables him to be both author and commentator; to state astounding paradoxes and then shrug his shoulders in sign of his own irresponsibility; to take the side of his opponents against what he, as a well-regulated editor, pretends to find extravagant and crazy doctrine, but what is really his own passionate heart's belief, however perversely expressed.

"Sartor Resartus": its Plan.

The book has a twofold meaning. In the first place, it is a veiled sardonic attack upon the shams and pretences of society, upon hollow rank, hollow officialism, hollow custom, out of which life and usefulness have departed. These are, Carlyle hints, the clothes which hide the real form of society, garments once useful, but grown by lapse of time to be mere fantastic frippery and stiff disfigurement, stifling the breath and health of the social body. Under the shield of this novel idea, he attacks the mechanical view of life, mechanical education, mechanical government, mechanical religion; and he preaches, now with drollery and paradox, now with fiery earnestness and prophetic possession, a return to sincerity in all things. In the second place, Carlyle applies the Clothes-philosophy mystically to the universe at large; showing that as clothes hide the real man, and as custom and convention hide real society, so Time and Space hide the real spiritual essence of the universe. He gives us, as the climax of the book, a transcendental vision of all created Nature as the garment of God; the same idea

Its Meaning.

which Goethe put forth in his description of the earth-spirit in Faust:

> "I sit at the roaring loom of Time
> And weave the living garment of God."

The fiction that he was translating from the German gave Carlyle an excuse for developing in Sartor Resartus a style of expression entirely without example, full of un-English idiom, of violent inversions, startling pauses and sharp angularities,—a style which he employed to rouse the attention of his reader as by a series of electric shocks. This extraordinary literary instrument he continued to use for the remainder of his life. It has been said that henceforth he wrote English no more, but "Carlylese." Whatever may be thought of "Carlylese" on purely artistic grounds, it is certain that it was wonderfully well suited to his purpose of rousing a sluggish public out of mental and moral apathy, into an alertness to great issues.

Its Style: "Carlylese."

Sartor Resartus proved Carlyle to be, with all discount for the perversities of his style, a great literary artist. This title was broadened and confirmed by his historical masterpiece, *The French Revolution.* Here we see to best advantage what Emerson calls the "stereoscopic imagination" of Carlyle, which detaches the figures from the background, and gives to the individual portraits unmatched vividness. The stupid, patient king, the "lion Mirabeau," the "sea-green incorruptible Robespierre," Marat the "large-headed dwarfish individual of smoke-bleared aspect,"—not only these chief figures, but the minor ones, a multitude of them, stand out in the reader's memory unforgettably. The larger pictures are equally admirable; the storming of the Bastille, the Feast of Pikes, the long-drawn agony of the Night of Spurs. Above all, the unity and sweep of the story, reminding us of a play of Shakespeare or of Æschylus, only acted

"The French Revolution."

by millions of figures on a gigantic stage, make this the capital example in English of the dramatic portraiture of an historical era, and establish beyond question Carlyle's right to be considered a great constructive artist.

Carlyle's Service to his Age.

Carlyle poured into the life of his time a stream of intense moral ardor and indignation which broke up the congealed waters and permanently raised the standard of ethical feeling. He united in remarkable degree the artistic and the moral impulse; and he is in this respect typical of the Victorian era, during which, more than ever before, art has been infused with moral purpose. But his nature was too extravagant, his tone too bitterly protesting, and his method too perverse, to allow him to become the supremely representative figure of the age. This position was reserved for Alfred Tennyson.

Tennyson's Early Life and Poetry.

Tennyson was born in 1809, at Somersby Rectory, Lincolnshire. His father was a vicar of the Established Church, holding his living by gift from a large landed proprietor; so that Tennyson was from birth in close connection with the main conservative interests of England, ecclesiastical and economic. In 1830, while an undergraduate at Cambridge, he published his first volume, a group of little verse-studies in word-melody and word-picture. Two years later appeared a second volume, showing, in such poems as "The Lady of Shalott" and "The Lotus-Eaters," a rapidly developing and already exquisite art; and in certain others, like "The Palace of Art," giving indication of his ambition to be not a singer merely, but also a teacher. Already, too, in "The Miller's Daughter" and "The May Queen," he began his long series of idylls of English life, short narratives richly pictured and melodiously tuned, with which he was destined to win the public, all the more easily perhaps because of a touch of sentimentality and unreality in their treatment.

These early volumes produced in the reviews an outburst of ridicule which kept Tennyson for a long time silent. For ten years he published nothing, but brooded and worked away in his London lodgings; until, in 1842, he came forth with two volumes which took the critics and the world by storm. In these two volumes the range and variety of work was phenomenal. Almost every province of poetry was touched upon, from the lyric simplicity of "Break, break, break" to the largely moulded epic narrative of "Morte d'Arthur." The pure dramatic form alone was absent, and in spite of many efforts Tennyson never succeeded in drama.

Five years later, in 1847, appeared *The Princess*. It was Tennyson's contribution to the question, then beginning to be widely discussed, of the higher education of women. The sub-title is "A Medley," and no description could be more just. The story is fantastically mixed, of elements brought from many ages and countries, and the style, always ornate and richly jewelled, runs through the gamut of true and false eloquence, returning always to the "mock-heroic" key in which the whole poem is somewhat uncertainly pitched. In *The Princess* we see Tennyson's eagerness to touch the vital public questions of his time, in odd conflict with his pure poetic interest in picture and melody. In his next work, however, *In Memoriam* (1850), the poetry interpenetrates the theme, and the theme itself is one which was just then engaging the minds of men more passionately than ever before in the world's history—the question of the immortality of the soul. The poem was written in memory of Arthur Hallam, a beloved friend and college-mate of Tennyson's, who had died in 1833. It consists of a hundred and thirty-one lyrics, "short swallow-flights of song," composed at intervals during seventeen years. In the beginning, the early phases of grief are touched upon, moods of stunned and bewildered sor-

"The Princess."

"In Memoriam."

row; gradually the personal pain merges itself into anxious speculation concerning the mystery of death and the hope of immortality; through states of doubt, despair, and anguished question, the poem slowly mounts into a region of firm though saddened faith; and it ends in a full hymnal music breathing hope and fortitude of heart. When *In Memoriam* was written, Darwin's tremendous hypothesis of the evolution of human life from lower forms had not yet been given to the world;* but the idea was already in the air, and in numberless ways Science had begun to sap the old foundations of religious faith. Tennyson courageously faced the facts of science, as revealed in geology and biology; and he succeeded in wringing religious consolation from the very things which were dreaded as a fatal menace to religion. In helping to break down the false opposition between science on the one hand, and poetry and spiritual faith on the other, *In Memoriam* did a great service to the age.

In 1850, Wordsworth, who had been poet-laureate after Southey, died; and Tennyson took the laurel. A government pension enabled him to marry, and to settle in the Isle of Wight. From this time until his death, forty-two years later, in 1892, he stood as the spokesman of his people in times of national sorrow or rejoicing. In *Maud* (1855) he used the Crimean war as a background. In such poems as "The Charge of the Light Brigade," "The Revenge," and the "Ode on the Duke of Wellington," he ministered to national pride, fired the national courage, and brought poetry nearer to the national life than it had been since Shakespeare. In the *Idylls of the King* he devoted fifteen years to painting the character of the first English national hero, King Arthur, and in giving a new meaning to the cycle of legend which had grown up in the middle ages about the knights of the Round Table.

Tennyson as Laureate.

* The *Origin of Species* appeared in 1859, the *Descent of Man* in 1871.

For more than half a century Tennyson held the poetic supremacy almost unchallenged. His series of unsuccessful experiments in the drama partly estranged the public from him; but at the end he won his readers back by several volumes of short poems in his old manner. One of these poems, "Merlin and the Gleam," has been taken as an allegory of his own poetical career; another, "Crossing the Bar," seemed to be his farewell word, spoken with solemn gladness as he put off into the mysterious sea of death.

By far the greatest work of Tennyson's later life is the *Idylls of the King*. The chief source from which he drew was the Morte d'Arthur of Sir Thomas Malory (see p. 58). A great tangled mass of legend and counter-legend, the material gathered by Malory, had lain for nearly four centuries awaiting the hand of some poet able to select, organize, and give it modern meaning. Milton had looked at it longingly in his youth, and had abandoned it only to take up the greater subject of Paradise Lost. Tennyson began early in his career to dip into its treasure-house of fancy, and to make short studies upon its themes. In the completed series of Idylls as published in 1870, the "Morte d'Arthur," published twenty-eight years before, is put last of the twelve, and is called "The Passing of Arthur." The others were written at long intervals apart, and in a very different order from that in which they now appear. The attempt often made to see in the Idylls a highly organized epic whole, is futile. The kind of epic unity which Milton could and would have given to the theme, it has not received at Tennyson's hands. The Idylls are to be read as single poems, bound together in loose federation by the persistence through them of Arthur's personality, the attempt which he made to build up an ideal kingdom, and the defeat of this attempt by the forces of sin and violence.

"Idylls of the King."

The most striking characteristic of Tennyson as an artist

is the compass and finish of his style. He essayed every kind of poetry, the song, the idyll, the dramatic monologue, the dialect poem, the descriptive or "pageant" poem, the ballad, the war-ode, the threnody, the epic narrative, and the drama. In all these, except the pure drama, he attained high, and in some the highest, excellence. Everywhere his style is one of exquisite finish, with a flawlessness of technique which it seems that no labor could improve. He did with style everything that conscious mastery can do. He emulated by turns the sweet felicity of Keats, the tender simplicity of Wordsworth, the straightforward vigor of Burns, the elusive melody and dreamlike magic of Coleridge, the stormy sweep of Byron, the large majesty of Milton; and he could blend them all into a style unmistakably Tennysonian, which impressed itself grandly upon his age. His is the best example in English of the "eclectic" style, made up of elements borrowed from many sources, and perfectly fused together. His quiet, sheltered, successful existence gave to his poetry uniform mellowness, richness, and serenity, at some expense of passion, reality, and tragic power.

Range and Finish of his Style.

It was the comparative weakness in him of these last qualities which made it impossible for him to succeed in the drama. In the *Idylls of the King*, especially in the relations between Lancelot, Guinevere, and Arthur, he had his greatest opportunity to portray moving human situations, and in certain passages he did indeed reach dramatic intensity; but as a whole the *Idylls* furnish us, not with human reality and tragic force, but with beauty—a beauty of dream, of cloudland, of Celtic magic; their whole effect may be best described by Keats's phrase, "huge cloudy symbols of a high romance."

Comparative Weakness of his Dramatic Sense.

The predominating characteristic of Tennyson's mind is his sense of law. The thing which most impresses him is the spectacle of order in the universe. The highest praise which he can give England is that she is "a land

of settled government," where freedom is ever "broadening down from precedent to precedent." He is impressed by science because its office is to show law reigning everywhere, subduing all life to a vast harmonious scheme. In *In Memoriam* a majestic movement is given to the poem by the fact that it follows the year twice through its revolutions, so that the succession of day and night, the moon's changing phases, the lapsing of the stars in their courses, the slow pageant of the seasons, seem at last to enfold with their large harmony and peace the forlorn heart of the mourner. This love of order also causes Tennyson to distrust individual whim and passion. The story of *The Princess* is the story of the overthrow of all that is whimsical and false in the heroine's plan for the enfranchisement of her sex, by a baby's touch; and the moral is that woman's place in life must be determined by the natural law of her being. In the *Idylls of the King* not only is the passion of Lancelot and Guinevere portrayed as the source of the moral ruin of Arthur's kingdom; but even the search for the Holy Grail is represented as contributing to this ruin, because it draws off Arthur's knights from their true work of establishing order and justice, and causes them to lose themselves in the extravagances of mystical passion. Tennyson is in constant protest, open or covert, against the individualism which the Victorian era inherited from the romantic revival. Yet he is nevertheless the supremely representative figure of that era, because he included and reconciled a greater number of its diverse interests than any other single writer.

His Sense of Law.

Robert Browning, who disputes with Tennyson the first place among Victorian poets, is Tennyson's opposite in almost every respect but fame and length of years. His genius was pre-eminently dramatic; his interest lay, not in universal law, but in individual passion. And his style, instead of being eclectic and

Tennyson and Browning Contrasted.

carefully elaborated, was individual to the point of lawlessness, and often careless of form in the pursuit of meaning. Browning is strong where Tennyson is weak, weak where Tennyson is strong. Both share almost equally in the Victorian tendency toward reflection, and toward a didactic aim; but their reflection was exercised upon very different phenomena, and their teaching was widely opposed.

Browning: his Life and Poetic Career.

Browning was born in London, in 1812. Mingled with the English and Scotch blood in his veins was a more distant strain of German and Creole, a fact of value in considering the wide cosmopolitan sympathy of his imagination. He passed his boyhood and youth in the suburb of Camberwell, near enough to London to make the great smoky city on the horizon a constant reminder of the complex human life he was to interpret more subtly and deeply than any poet had done since the Elizabethan age. His first stimulus to poetic creation was given by a volume of Shelley which he picked up by chance on a London book-stall in his fourteenth year. His first long poem, *Pauline,* published in 1833, is a half-dramatic study of the type of spiritual life which Shelley's own career embodied; and Shelley's influence is clearly traceable both in its thought and in its style. After a trip to Russia and Italy, Browning published *Paracelsus,* in his twenty-fourth year. This, like *Pauline,* is the "history of a soul." In it, Browning's wonderful endowments are already manifest. His knowledge of the causes of spiritual growth and decay, his subtle analysis of motive and counter-motive, his eloquence in pleading a cause, the enkindled power and beauty of his language when blown upon by noble passion, all appear in full process of development. The hinderances from which he suffered are also only too clear, especially his tendency to lose himself in tangled thought, and to grow harsh and obscure in pursuing the secondary suggestions of his theme.

In *Sordello* (1840) these faults smother down the clear fire of poetry into a torpid smoke. In *Pippa Passes,* however (1841), he shook himself entirely free from these faults of manner, and produced a poem of sustained beauty, as clear as sunlight, a flawless work of simple, melodious, impassioned art. Between 1840 and 1845 Browning was chiefly occupied with attempts in the acting drama, of which the most interesting are perhaps *In a Balcony, Colombe's Birthday, A Blot in the 'Scutcheon,* and *The Return of the Druses.* He had also begun those short poems dealing with special moments in the lives of various men and women, historical or imaginary, which constitute the most important division of his work. These are now included under such collective titles as *Dramatic Lyrics, Dramatic Romances,* and *Men and Women.*

In 1846 Browning married Elizabeth Barrett, whose poetic reputation was then far greater than his, and went to live in Italy. The pair settled at Florence, in the house called *Casa Guidi,* from which was taken the title of Mrs. Browning's poem on the Italian Liberation, *Casa Guidi Windows.* Here Browning continued his great series of dramatic monologues. Here also, after Mrs. Browning's death in 1861, he began *The Ring and the Book.* This is the crowning effort of his genius, for the vastness of its scope and its grasp of human nature; though it lacks the spontaneous grace and charm which the best of his shorter pieces share with *Pippa Passes,* that perfect fruit of his youthful imagination. After the death of his wife, Browning spent most of his time in England. He wrote much, with a steady gain in intellectual subtlety, but with a corresponding loss of poetic beauty. He made a more and more deliberate sacrifice of form to matter, wrenching and straining the verse-fabric in order to pack into it all the secondary meanings of the theme. To the last, however, his genius continued to throw out bursts and jets of exquisite music, color, and feeling. Such, for

instance, are the little pieces called "Wanting is—What?" and "Never the Time and the Place," written in his seventy-first year; and such is "Summum Bonum," written just before the pen dropped from his hand in 1889, in the seventy-seventh year of his age. He had had to wait long for recognition, but during the latter years of his life his fame overshadowed even that of Tennyson, and his works were studied and made a cult of, with an enthusiasm seldom accorded to a living poet.

Browning's earliest poem, *Pauline*, was, he tells us, intended as the first of a series of "mono-dramatic epics," each of which was to present the "history of a soul." Broadly viewed, the whole of Browning's work is what his youthful ambition dreamed of making it. In three forms, pure drama, dramatic narrative, and dramatic lyric, he gave the history of hundreds of souls; or if not their whole history, at least some crucial moment of it, when its issues trembled in the balance and dipped toward good or evil. In his earlier life he made many attempts to present these crucial moments in regular drama intended for the stage, but the form was not perfectly suited to his peculiar task. In *Pippa Passes*, however, while keeping the dramatic form, he threw aside the demands of stage presentation, and presented four special moments of soul-history, connected with each other only by a slight thread. The germ of the poem came to him in youth, while listening to a gypsy girl singing in the Camberwell woods. He imagined someone walking alone through life, apparently too obscure to leave any trace behind, but unconsciously exercising a lasting influence at every step. This abstract conception he afterward connected with the personality of a little silk-winder in the silk-mills of Asolo, a mountain town which he had visited on his first journey to Italy. Pippa walks through Asolo on New Year's Day, her one holiday in the year, uncon-

His Interest in "Special Moments" of Soul History: Illustrated by "Pippa Passes."

sciously dropping her divine songs into the lives of four groups of people, just at the moment when their fates are trembling between good and evil, courage and cowardice; and by the touching purity and gladness of her voice, or by the significant words she utters, she saves each in turn. At evening she goes back to her bare room, and sinks to sleep with a final song on her lips, still ignorant of the service she has done to "Asolo's happiest four."

Strength and Weakness of his Dramatic Genius.

Pippa Passes illustrates the essential qualities of Browning's dramatic genius. He cannot throw, as could Shakespeare and his fellows, large and varied groups of people together, and make them act and interact with the ceaseless play and evolution of life. Nor has he the greater Shakespearean gift—the supreme dramatic gift—of forgetting and obscuring himself. In all the words which his characters utter, we seem to hear the ring of Browning's own voice; as an accompaniment to their actions there always runs, silent or expressed, his comment of blame or praise. He is less a dramatist, than an exhibitor and interpreter of single dramatic situations, such as the four which are bound loosely together by Pippa's chance-heard songs. But in presenting these single situations Browning's power is absolute; here he works with the most graphic vividness, and with a compression of meaning which crowds into a few lines the implications of a lifetime.

His Short Poems: Peculiarities of his Method.

It follows from the peculiar nature of Browning's dramatic gift, that his most vital work is in his short poems, where he handles single situations or soul-states, isolated from what has come before and from what is to come after. In these he not only selects by preference a highly special moment in the life of the man or woman whose soul he wishes to show us in its working, but as a rule he views his theme from some odd and striking point of view. Perhaps the very best example of his skill in selecting a point of view, is to be found

in the "Epistle of Karshish." The aim of the poem is to present the state of mind of a person who has beheld the mysteries of existence beyond the grave, and who has brought back into mortal life a sense of immortality so strong that every act and every judgment is determined by it. The time is about thirty years after the death of Christ; and the speaker, Karshish, is an Arabian doctor who in travelling through Palestine has met Lazarus, and who sends a report of the strange case to his old master in leechcraft, Abib. Through the vain struggle of Karshish to maintain his scientific scepticism in the face of Lazarus's story and bearing, we are made to feel the reality of the miracle with overwhelming force, and are brought strangely near to the conditions of life in Palestine in the next generation after Christ. Another peculiarity of Browning's method in his short poems is that he throws the reader into the midst of the theme with startling suddenness, and then proceeds to flash facet after facet of the subject on him, with a rapidity which is apt to bewilder a reader not in the secret of the method. There are no explanations, no gradual transitions; we are not allowed to guess at the whole intention until the end is reached. A capital example of this peculiarity is the "Soliloquy in a Spanish Cloister," which has to be read to the end before we see it for what it is, the self-revealed picture of a narrow-minded, superstitious, sensual monk, stirred to hatred by a brother monk, whose mild, benignant ways and genuine piety we gradually discern through the speaker's jeers and curses. If we add to these peculiarities of method the fact that Browning's best work is very compressed in style, we see why many persons have found obscure in him what is in reality clear enough, but is not to be perceived clearly without attention and alertness on the reader's part. Perhaps the poem which best illustrates all Browning's peculiarities of method, harmoniously combined, is "My Last Duchess," a marvellous example of his power to give a whole life-

history, with a wealth of picturesque detail, in a few lines intensely compressed and heavily weighted with suggestion.

The range of Browning's dramatic sympathy is very great. In "Caliban upon Setebos" he has shown the grotesque protoplasmic imaginings of a half-human monster, groping after an explanation of the universe. In "Childe Roland" he has shown the mystical heart of mediæval knighthood, fronting spectral terrors in its search after the stronghold of sin, the Dark Tower where lurks the enemy of life and joy. In "Abt Vogler," and a "A Toccata of Galuppi's" he has touched upon the inner meanings of music, and has painted for us permanent types of the musical enthusiast. In "The Grammarian's Funeral" he has shown the poetry and heroism hidden underneath the gray exterior of the life of a Renaissance pedant. In "Fra Lippo Lippi," "Andrea del Sarto," and "Pictor Ignotus," he has given the psychology of the painter's nature, and has flashed illumination upon the sources of success and failure in art which lie deep in the moral being of the artist. In "Balaustion's Adventure" he has revealed the inner spirit of Greek life in the fourth century before Christ. In "A Death in the Desert" he has led us into the mystical rapture of the early Christians; and in "Christmas Eve" and "Easter Day" he has approached Christian faith from the modern position. In "Saul" he has shown us, against the splendid background of patriarchal Israel, the boy David singing, in the tent of the great king, songs of human joy which rise, in a sudden opening of the heavens of prophecy, into a song of the coming of the Messiah. Nowhere out of Shakespeare can be found a mind more wide-ranging over the outer circumstances and the inner significance of man's life, or a more unwearied inquiry into its spiritual crises.

His Wide Dramatic Sympathy.

Browning's poetry is intensely charged with moral pur-

pose. The world is for him, in Keats's phrase, the "Valley of Soul-making;" and every act, thought, and feeling of life is of concern only as it hinders or determines the soul on its course. But he believes salvation to lie, not, as does Tennyson, in the suppression of individual will and passion, but in their strenuous exercise. It is the moments of high excitement in human life which interest him, because in such moments the great saving assertions of will and passion are made. Hence his interest in art, which embodies these moments of high excitement; and hence his indifference to science, which deals with impersonal law. Love, as the supreme experience and function of the soul, testing its temper and revealing its probable fate, holds the first place in his thought. In such poems as "Cristina," "Evelyn Hope," "The Last Ride Together," "My Star," "By the Fireside," and a multitude more, he has presented love in its varied phases; and has celebrated its manifold meanings not only on earth, but in the infinite range of worlds through which he believes that the soul is destined to go in search after its own perfection. By the intensity and positiveness of his doctrine he has influenced his age profoundly, and has made his name synonymous with faithfulness to the human love which life brings, and through that to the divine love which it implies and promises.

His Teaching.

The robustness of Browning's nature, its courage, its abounding joy and faith in life, make his works a permanent storehouse of spiritual energy for the race, a storehouse to which for a long time to come it will in certain moods always return. In an age distracted by doubt and divided in will, his strong unfaltering voice has been lifted above the perplexities and hesitations of men, like a bugle-call to joyous battle in which the victory is to the brave.

One of Browning's most perfect short poems, "One Word More," is addressed to his wife, Elizabeth Barrett

Browning (1806*–1861), and is a kind of counter-tribute to her most perfect work, the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, which contain the record of her courtship and marriage. Her early life was shadowed by illness and affliction; and her early poetry (*The Seraphim*, 1838, *Poems*, 1844) shows in many places the defects of unreality and of overwrought emotion natural to work produced in the loneliness of a sick-chamber. The best known of these early poems are perhaps "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," where she works under the influence of Tennyson's idylls, and "The Cry of the Children," where she voices the humanitarian protest against the practice of employing child-labor in mines and factories. After her marriage and removal to Italy her health improved, and her art greatly strengthened itself. The *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850) are among the noblest love-poems in the language, taking rank with Shakespeare's Sonnets and Rossetti's *House of Life* as one of the three great English sonnet-cycles. Mrs. Browning was deeply interested in the struggle of Italy to shake off her bondage to Austria, as is shown by her *Casa Guidi Windows*, published in 1851. In 1856 appeared her most ambitious work, *Aurora Leigh*, a kind of versified novel of modern English life, with a social reformer and humanitarian, of aristocratic lineage, for hero, and a young poetess, in large part a reflection of Mrs. Browning's own personality, for heroine. *Aurora Leigh* shows the influence of a great novel-writing age, when the novel was becoming more and more imbued with social purpose. It attempts to perform in verse the same social function which Dickens, George Eliot, Kingsley, and others, strove to perform in prose. The interest in public questions also appears in Mrs. Browning's *Poems before Congress* (1860), and in her *Last Poems* (1862).

Mrs. Browning.

* Mrs. Browning's birth is usually given as 1809. We have, however, Browning's own positive statement as to the correctness of the earlier date.

Mrs. Browning's technique is uncertain, and she never freed herself from her characteristic faults of vagueness and unrestraint. But her sympathy with noble causes, the elevation and ardor of her moods of personal emotion, and the distinction of her utterances at its best, outbalance these negative considerations. She shares her husband's strenuousness and optimism, but she speaks always from the feminine vantage-ground. Her characteristic note is that of intimate, personal feeling; even *Casa Guidi Windows* has been aptly called "a woman's love-making with a nation."

Arnold.

Browning's robust optimism in the face of all the unsettling and disturbing forces of the age is thrown out in sharp relief, when we contrast him with a somewhat younger poet, Matthew Arnold, in whom the prevailing tone is one of doubt and half-despairing stoicism. Arnold was born in 1822, the son of Dr. Thomas Arnold, the famous head-master of Rugby. He went up to Oxford just at the time when the neo-Catholic religious revival, under John Keble and John Henry Newman, was stirring the university to its depths. The unsettling effect of this agitation, coming after the very different religious teaching of Rugby, had much to do with determining Arnold's characteristic attitude of mind toward questions of faith. From his thirtieth year until shortly before his death in 1888, he held the position of Inspector of Schools. To the demands and responsibilities of this official position were added, in 1857, those of a professorship of poetry at Oxford. These outer circumstances were largely instrumental in turning his energies away from poetry, into the field of prose criticism, where, for the last twenty years of his life, he held the position of a leader, almost of a dictator.

Arnold may be described as a poet of transition. His bent as a poet was taken chiefly between 1840 and 1850. These were the closing years of the transition between the

first and the second outburst of creative energy in the century. Carlyle, Browning, Tennyson, and Newman, were, each in his way, already building anew the structures of spiritual faith and hope; but to Arnold, as to many others, the ebbing of the old wave was far more clearly felt than the rising of the new one. Standing, as he says,

Arnold a Poet of Transition.

> "between two worlds, one dead,
> The other powerless to be born,"

he fronts life wearily, or at best stoically. He seeks consolation in the intellect; and his poetry, though penetrated with romantic sensibility, has always the intellectual self-consciousness which betrays the classical bias.

On the side of religion, Arnold's dejection led him to a melancholy return upon the old faiths, and to a stoical rejection of them as outworn things, "a dead time's exploded dream." He has expressed this at least twice very impressively, in "Dover Beach" and "Obermann." It is this same dejection applied to the facts of human intercourse, which breathes sadly but calmly through the series of love lyrics entitled "Switzerland." Just as he has felt compelled to surrender his faith in a personal God and a compassionate Saviour, so, as he regards the human heart and its destiny, he loses faith in the heart's promises as well. He sees the sad instability of mortal affection, rather than its heroic constancy; he is pierced by a sense of the inevitable loneliness of each human soul. The imperfections and unrealized ideals of life, in which Tennyson found cause to "faintly trust the larger hope," and in which Browning saw the "broken arcs" of Heaven's "perfect round," Arnold made a reason for doubt, declaring that men should put away delusion, and expect in the future only what they see in the past. Other phases of this stoic dejection, and of the struggle which it wages with the restless craving for joy, are to be

His Attitude Toward Life.

studied in the pieces called "Self-Dependence" and "A Summer Night."

His Ideal of Form.

For his ideal of form, Arnold went resolutely to the literature of Greece, abjuring romantic wilfulness and vagueness, in favor of classic lucidity and restraint. When he works more deliberately in the Greek spirit and manner, his style is often cold and dry. In his long poems, especially, he is apt to sacrifice too much to his reverence for classical tradition. Only one of them, "Sohrab and Rustum," combines classic purity of style with romantic ardor of feeling. The truth of its oriental color, the deep pathos of the situation, the fire and intensity of the action, the strong conception of character, and the full, solemn music of the verse, make "Sohrab and Rustum" unquestionably the masterpiece among Arnold's longer poems. The same unity of classic form with romantic feeling characterizes his two shorter masterpieces, "The Scholar Gypsy" and "Thyrsis," which are crystal-clear without coldness, and restrained without loss of a full volume of power.

Arnold was not able, in his poetry, to live through the period of dejection and doubt, and to follow to their mature issues such hints of hope and faith as his poems show. Not even in "Thyrsis," the beautiful threnody in which he celebrated his dead friend Clough, has he found it possible to embrace any but the most shadowy consolation. In "Obermann Once More," he does, indeed, for a moment emerge into something like optimism; but when that piece was written his work as a poet was done. He had definitely chosen to work out his life on the lower levels of prose, and had put aside most of the deeper questionings, to occupy himself with matters of taste and discrimination. From the first, the intellectual element of his verse had threatened to smother the emotional, and now the critic finally took the place of the poet in him.

His Desertion of Poetry for Prose.

Arnold's prose has little trace of the wistful melancholy of his verse. It is almost always urbane, vivacious, light-hearted. The classical bent of his mind shows itself here, unmixed with the inheritance of romantic feeling which colors his poetry. Not only is his prose classical in quality, by virtue of its restraint, of its definite aim, and of the dry white light of intellect which suffuses it; but the doctrine which he spent his life in preaching is based upon a classical ideal, the ideal of symmetry, wholeness, or, as he daringly called it, *perfection*. Carlyle had preached the value of conduct, the "Hebraic" element in life; Arnold set himself to preach the value of the complementary "Hellenic" element,—open-mindedness, delight in ideas, alertness to entertain new points of view and willingness to examine life constantly in the light of new postulates. Wherever, in religion, politics, education, or literature, he saw his countrymen under the domination of narrow ideals, he came speaking the mystic word of deliverance, "Culture." Culture, acquaintance with the best which has been thought and done in the world, is his panacea for all ills. It is by culture that the Puritan dissenter shall be made to see the lack of elevation and beauty in his church forms; that the radical politician shall reach a saving sense of the rawness and vulgarity of his programme of state; that the man whose literary taste is bad shall be admitted into the true kingdom of letters. In almost all of his prose writing he attacks some form of "Philistinism," by which word he characterized the narrow-mindedness and self-satisfaction of the British middle class.

His "Gospel of Ideas."

Arnold's tone is admirably fitted to the peculiar task he had to perform. Carlyle, in *Past and Present* and elsewhere, had preached the gospel of action, with fiery earnestness, in the spirit of a Hebrew prophet; Arnold, in *Culture and Anarchy* and many successive works, made his plea for the gospel of

His Prose Manner.

ideas with urbanity and playful grace, as befitted the Hellenic spirit, bringing "sweetness and light" into the dark places of British prejudice. Sometimes, as in *Literature and Dogma,* where he pleads for a more liberal and literary reading of the Bible, his manner is quiet, suave, and gently persuasive. At other times, as in *Friendship's Garland,* he shoots the arrows of his sarcasm into the ranks of the Philistines with a delicate raillery and scorn, all the more exasperating to his foes because it is veiled by a mock humility, and is scrupulously polite.

His Literary Criticism.

Of Arnold's literary criticism, the most notable single piece is the famous essay "On Translating Homer," which deserves careful study for the enlightenment it offers concerning many of the fundamental questions of style. The essays on Wordsworth and on Byron, from *Essays in Criticism,* and that on Emerson, from *Discourses in America,* furnish good examples of Arnold's charm of manner and weight of matter in this province.

His "Post-Romantic" Point of View.

The total impression which Arnold makes in his prose may be described as that of a spiritual man-of-the-world. In comparison with Carlyle, Ruskin, and Newman, he is worldly. For the romantic passion and mystic vision of these men, he substitutes an ideal of balanced cultivation, the ideal of the trained, sympathetic, cosmopolitan gentleman. He marks a return to the conventions of life after the storm and stress of the romantic age. Yet in his own way he also was a prophet and a preacher, striving whole-heartedly to release his countrymen from bondage to mean things, and pointing their gaze to that symmetry and balance of character which has seemed to many noble minds the true goal of human endeavor.

The dictatorship of taste which Arnold held in matters of literature, was held in matters of art by John Ruskin; who also broadened his criticism, as did Arnold,

into the region of social and moral ideals. His nature was a more ardent one than Arnold's; and his crusade against bad art, as well as against social and moral falsehood, partook of the Hebraic intensity of Carlyle, whose disciple, indeed, he acknowledged himself to be. He was born in 1819. His father, a London wine-merchant of wealth and liberal tastes, gave him every early advantage of education and travel. Family carriage trips through England, France, and Switzerland, enabled him to gather those impressions of landscape beauty and of architectural effect, which he afterward put to remarkable use in his critical writings. A boyish enthusiasm for the paintings of William Turner ripened with years into an ardent championship of that wonderful artist, then obscure and neglected. In the first volume of *Modern Painters*, published in his twenty-fourth year, Ruskin enshrined Turner as the greatest of English landscape painters. In doing so, however, his powers of analysis led him deep into the abstract theory of art; and in the remainder of the work, published at intervals during the next eighteen years, he examined many types and schools of painting, separating what he held to be true from what he held to be false, with haughty and uncompromising assurance. Meanwhile, in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *Stones of Venice*, he made a similar examination of the principal types of European architecture, and attempted to establish similar underlying principles concerning their growth and decay, their worth and worthlessness. Many of Ruskin's judgments may of course be dissented from, but it cannot be questioned that in his writings art criticism was put for the first time upon a broad philosophic basis. He believed the springs of art to lie deep in the moral nature of the artist, and in the moral temper of the age and nation which produced him. Latent or expressed, this is the pervading idea of all Ruskin's art criticism. By insistence upon this view, by eloquent

Ruskin: His Early Life and Art Criticism.

illustration and fiery defence of it, he gradually led his readers to a new understanding of the spiritual meaning of art, and awakened them to a new discrimination.

Later Life: Ethical and Economic Teaching.

In 1860, at forty years of age, Ruskin finished *Modern Painters*, and practically closed that series of works which had made him the foremost art critic of the century. From this time on he used art mainly as illustration and text, by means of which to enforce some ethical, economic, or religious lesson. He became more and more absorbed in the problems of socialism, being led thereto by the conviction at which he had arrived in his previous work, that all great art must be national and social, and must spring from healthy and beautiful conditions of life in the society where it arises. Modern art he held to be, with a few exceptions, debased; and he gradually came to believe that this debasement was due to our commercial organization of society. In two books, *Munera Pulveris* and *Unto This Last*, he protested against the received theories of political economy. The outline of his thought is imperfectly filled in, but the substance of his teaching is that economics must be looked at from the standpoint of what does and what does not constitute true "value," that is, of what does and what does not contribute to the ultimate good of man. He includes, therefore, in his "political economy" many departments of human effort not included in the previous "commercial economy," as he insists that the science of the old economists should be called. In thus broadening the basis of discussion, and giving a new significance to the term "value," Ruskin did a real service for the economic thought of the future.

His most popular book, *Sesame and Lilies*, was in part a side-product of his thinking on political economy. In the first division of the book, entitled "King's Treasuries," he holds up to censure England's absorption in worldly success, as opposed to spiritual success. To the "gospel of

getting-on," which depends for its appealing power upon the idea that money constitutes the only real "value," he opposes the gospel of spiritual wealth, especially as deposited in books, those King's Treasuries which are the real centre of the realm of "value." The second part, "Queen's Garden," is Ruskin's contribution to the "woman problem" of the century, the theme being the same as that of Tennyson's *Princess*. *Sesame and Lilies* is written in a style of wonderful strength and richness. It affords perhaps the best single example of its author's mastery over the manifold chords of prose expression.

His Last Years.

As he went on in years, Ruskin's sympathy went out more and more to the oppressed and unjustly treated of this world; and he spent a large part of his time and energy, as well as the bulk of his fortune, in attempting to help the working classes by word and deed. After his removal in 1872 to Brantwood, in Wordsworth's country among the English lakes, his chief connection with the outside world was through a series of letters to working-men, entitled *Fors Clavigera*, which contain some of his ripest teaching, as well as much humorous and sweet-minded familiar talk. In *Fors Clavigera* first appeared his autobiography, *Præterita*, where a delightfully naïve and candid account is given of his boyhood and youth. He died in 1899.

His Style.

Ruskin combined many gifts and qualities: a subtle intellect, a nervous system which vibrated intensely to impressions of beauty and ugliness, great moral ardor, marked impatience and dogmatism, and a marvellous power of prose expression. His style is based on the prose of the English Bible, modified by the religious writers of the seventeenth century, especially by the florid style of Jeremy Taylor; and it is enriched by a unique gift of description, lyrical in movement and splendid in color. His best descriptive passages, for example the famous dithyramb on St. Mark's cathedral in

Stones of Venice, that on the Falls of Schaffhausen, in *Modern Painters,* or that on the Rhone at Geneva, in *Præterita,* are among the capital examples of ornate prose in English. His style is as markedly romantic, in its emotional quality and its search after beauty, as Arnold's is classical, in its subordination of emotion to intellect, and in its effort to secure clearness at any cost.

In the use to which he put his powers, Ruskin shows the strong sociological drift of the Victorian era. The first half of his life was taken up with the effort to vivify and spiritualize the æsthetic perceptions of his countrymen, an effort parallel with that of Arnold to combat the sloth of their intellect, with that of Carlyle to make more sincere and valiant their personal character, and with that of Newman (whom we shall presently consider) to arouse their religious imagination. The latter half of his life was taken up with a protest against modern civilization, and with a search after some better basis of society than the present commercial one. Instead, however, of looking forward for this ideal, he looked backward; he believed that the only salvation for the world lay in a reversion to mediævalism, or at least to some features of mediævalism. In this respect he connects himself not only with the general stream of romantic thought, but especially with the great religious movement of the second quarter of the century, known as the "Tractarian" or "Oxford Movement."

The Oxford Movement.

The Oxford Movement, the effect of which on Arnold has been already noted, constitutes one of the most interesting chapters in the spiritual history of the century. It was a concerted attempt on the part of a few young Oxford men, re-enforced later by numerous adherents, to reclaim the Church of England from the torpor and deadness into which it had fallen, and to give it once more the poetry, the mystic symbolism, and the spiritual charm, which had characterized the Catholic

Church in the Middle Ages. The original inspiration of the movement was given by John Keble (1792–1866), author of *The Christian Year*, after Herbert's *Temple* the best book of devotional verse in English. The greatest force in the spiritual revolution, however, was John Henry Newman, afterward Cardinal Newman (1801–1890).

Newman: his Religious History.

In 1833, Newman, then a fellow of Oriel College and vicar of St. Mary's, the University church of Oxford, took a trip to Italy and Sicily, in the course of which the vague feeling of his mission to redeem the English Church began to solidify into a firm resolve. At Palermo, as he lay dangerously ill of a fever, he kept exclaiming, "I shall not die, I have a work to do." Sailing from Palermo to Marseilles in an orange-boat, he was becalmed in the straits of Bonifacio, and here he wrote the famous hymn, "Lead, Kindly Light." Upon his return he began a series of "four-o'clock sermons" at St. Mary's, during which he gradually and almost unconsciously drifted away from the Anglican and toward the Catholic Church. In 1842, he withdrew from Oxford, with several young followers, to Littlemore, where for three years he led a life of prayer, fasting, and monastic seclusion; and where, in 1845, he was received by Father Dominic into the Roman Church. His conversion was a tremendous shock to English churchmen, and led to endless attack and recrimination. At last, in reply to a charge of hypocrisy made by Charles Kingsley, Newman wrote an account of his religious life previous to his entering the Catholic Church, entitled *Apologia pro Vita Sua*. The exquisite sincerity of this confession revolutionized the popular estimate of Newman, and made him henceforth an object of veneration even to those who differed from him most bitterly on theological questions. In 1878 he was made cardinal by Pope Leo XIII.; and twelve years later he died at the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, Edgbaston.

The "Apologia."

Newman's prose style is characterized at its best by an unobtrusive distinction, and by a kind of aërial transparency in comparison with which even Arnold's prose appears slightly dense. Although Arnold's meaning is always perfectly clear, it reaches us, so to speak, through a resisting medium; we are conscious of his manner. Newman, it may almost be said, has no manner, or at least his manner is so completely one with his matter that it passes unobserved; his words convey his meaning as ether conveys light. If Arnold is as clear as crystal, Newman is as clear as mountain-air. This quality of style, by virtue of which it incorporates itself in meaning, and becomes, as it were, invisible, is the highest attainable quality; and Newman, in certain passages especially of his *Apologia* and his *Idea of a University*, has perhaps come nearer than any prose-writer of this century in England, to the type of perfect prose.

Newman's Prose Style.

Newman was a writer almost by accident. He was essentially a leader of men, an ecclesiastical prince, who used literature as an instrument of his rule. But he was also a mystic and a poet, gifted with a literary power of the most winning and magnetic kind. His influence upon pure literature has therefore been great. His mediæval cast of mind, his passionate perception of the beauty of the symbolism embodied in the mediæval church, united with Ruskin's devotion to mediæval art to influence a remarkable group of young painters and poets, known as the "Preraphaelites." The "Preraphaelite movement" was in its essence an attempt to respiritualize art and poetry, kindred with the attempt of the "Oxford movement" to respiritualize the English church.

His Influence on Literature: the Preraphaelites.

The "Preraphaelite Brotherhood" was strictly not a literary, but an artistic organization, consisting of a number of young painters and sculptors banded together for the avowed purpose of redeeming English art from convention-

ality, and of recalling it to nature. They took as their models those early Italian painters preceding Raphael, who had treated the most mystical of religious themes with simple-hearted realism. For subjects the Preraphaelites went back to the Middle Ages, and their work took on the mystical, allegorical, and religious character inseparable from mediæval thought. A kind of naïve earnestness and simplicity of treatment, with a mystical and intangible poetry of conception, were the dominant qualities in the work of these young enthusiasts, who took their mission very seriously, as a "holy war and crusade against the age." Several members of the Brotherhood were poets as well as painters and sculptors; and there grew out of the artistic movement a literary one, which found its first expression in a little magazine called "The Germ," published for a short time during 1850. In "The Germ" appeared the early work of two poets who best represent this peculiar renaissance of nineteenth century poetry, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Morris.

The Preraphaelite Movement.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti was born in London in 1828. His father was an Italian patriot who had taken refuge in England from political persecution; his mother was of mixed Italian and English blood. Dante Gabriel was the eldest of four children, of whom two others attained distinction in literature: William Michael as a critic, Christina as a lyrical poet, gifted beyond any English woman except Mrs. Browning with the poetic instinct, and outranking even her in delicate and spontaneous melody. At nineteen Rossetti adopted the career of painter; and a year later he wrote the poem which perhaps best illustrates the Preraphaelite movement on its literary side, "The Blessed Damosel."

Rossetti: his Youth and Early Poetry.

The Blessed Damosel, wearing the "white rose of Mary's gift," and holding the mystic lilies, leans from the "gold bar of Heaven," yearning for her earthly lover, and pict-

uring to herself the time when she shall lead him with her among the celestial groves and by the living waters of God. The sights and sounds of Heaven are imaged forth in the poem with a concreteness which would be startling if it were not so solemnized by spiritual meaning, and so freighted with spiritual awe. From time to time, as the poem progresses, our minds are led out from among the shadowy landscapes and the indwelling spirits of Paradise, down through illimitable star spaces, to where upon earth the lover sits, hearing in the autumnal rustle of the leaves the feet of his beloved, as she tries to reach him down the echoing stairs of the sky. Besides the touching emotion of the poem, the wonderful beauty and reach of its imagery, it has a melody sweeter and more sensitive than Rossetti ever attained afterward.

"The Blessed Damosel."

The union of simplicity and concreteness with spirituality, which makes this poem typical of the Preraphaelite aims in both poetry and painting, appears equally in another early poem of Rossetti's, "My Sister's Sleep." The strained stillness and suspense of a death-chamber, the anguish and holy fortitude of a mother in the presence of her loss, are given with a passionate reserve and a tender realism which make this the second, if not the first, of Rossetti's poems. In connection with these early pieces, should be read "The Portrait," a love poem of Rossetti's later years, where we see the human heart of the poet once more at its strongest and sweetest.

A considerable portion of Rossetti's verse was written in his early life, but only a few poems were then published. In his thirty-second year he married a Miss Siddall, whose rare type of beauty he has immortalized in the best known of his pictures, the "Beata Beatrix." Two years after the marriage, his wife died; and in despair at his loss, Rossetti placed in her coffin all his unpublished writings. They remained buried until 1869, when they were exhumed by his friends, and pub-

Later Life and Poetry.

lished the following year. This volume of 1870, another published eleven years after, and a volume of translations from the early Italian poets, entitled *Dante and his Circle,* constitute the whole of Rossetti's poetical output. After his wife's death he withdrew more and more into himself, until he became a complete recluse. Intense brooding upon his loss, added to the disastrous effects of the drug which he took as a relief from insomnia, made his life a tragedy only relieved by the creative play of his mind, which continued to embody itself in pictures and poems of strange and sometimes morbid beauty.

Rossetti made several attempts in the ballad, two of which are remarkable, "Sister Helen" and "The King's Tragedy." Sister Helen deals with the mediæval superstition that if a waxen image, shaped to represent some living person, were melted before a fire with incantations and unholy prayers, that person's life would dwindle and go out, as the image was destroyed. The speakers in the poem are a young woman who is melting a waxen image of her false lover, and her little brother, who sits at the window, looking out upon the wintry landscape to report to her the coming of the friends of the dying man to plead for mercy. The unconsciousness and vague apprehension of the child are wonderfully used to heighten the atmosphere of vengeful passion and ghostly horror in which the poem moves. The effect is heightened also by a burden or refrain, subtly varied to serve as a kind of Greek chorus to the action, commenting upon it in transcendental terms. "The King's Tragedy" is, so far as virility and dramatic power are concerned, Rossetti's masterpiece; the blank verse poem called "The Confession," written under Browning's influence, should be read with "The King's Tragedy" as further illustration of Rossetti's power to handle dramatic material. "Sister Helen."

The House of Life, in the final form which it took in the volume of 1881, consists of a hundred and one sonnets,

dealing with the poet's love-history and loss. The language and the imagery are here more elaborate than in Rossetti's earlier work, and the music more conscious and artful. We miss in *The House of Life* the spontaneity and simple charm of the early lyrics, though in recompense we gain the pleasure which comes from hearing a complex musical instrument played with mature mastership.

"The House of Life."

As a whole, Rossetti's poetry is marked by great picturesqueness and visual beauty. It is "painter's poetry," in that its appeal is constantly to the eye. Music it has too, but the tendency to load itself with elaborate detail often defeats the music, and makes of the verse a kind of poetical tapestry, stiff with emblazoned images. Where it is not the poetry of a painter it is the poetry of a prisoner and a recluse. Outdoor nature, the common life of men, appear in it seldom. In the main, its atmosphere is close and heavily perfumed, its emotion somewhat morbid and cloying. It is the poetry of a nature born for the generous sunlight and color of Italy, and compelled to build a dream-world amid the chill fog and bitter smoke of London.

William Morris displays, much more completely than Rossetti, the reversion to the Middle Ages which characterized the Preraphaelite group of poets and painters; though his work is lacking in the mysticism and spiritual grace which is their second great peculiarity. Morris was born in 1834, and his youth was spent at Walthamstow, on the borders of Epping Forest, the tangled glades and rough hornbeam thickets of which, in places then almost as primeval as in Robin Hood's day, may have had something to do with determining the romantic bent of his mind. He went up to Oxford after the neo-catholic movement under Keble and Newman was over, but while the excitement produced by it was still in the air. The tendency of this movement to throw

Morris.

the mind back upon mediæval modes of thought and feeling, falling in with Morris's native sympathies and reinforced by his acquaintanceship with Rossetti, determined the character of his first volume of verse, *The Defence of Guenevere.* In this volume, many phases of mediævalism are touched upon with power: the joyous adventurousness of the knightly life finds a bright celebration in "The Day before Crecy" and "The Gilliflower of Gold"; in "The Haystack in the Floods" and "Shameful Death" are pictured the darker sides of mediæval existence, its violence and terrible ferocity; in "The Sailing of the Sword" and "The Blue Closet" still other aspects, more purely picturesque and fanciful, are given with a rapid and brilliant touch.

"The Defence of Guenevere."

In his thirty-third year (1867), Morris published a long narrative poem, *The Life and Death of Jason.* Here he went back to ancient Greece for his story; but his treatment of his theme is thoroughly mediæval, and the poem is written in the same kind of diffuse, soft-colored, gently flowing verse in which the Norman-French *trouvères* had sung the interminable adventures of their knights and paladins. Three years later, in 1870, appeared Morris's masterpiece, *The Earthly Paradise,* a collection of verse-narratives held together by an ingenious scheme, analogous to that which Chaucer used in binding together his Canterbury Tales. A band of Northmen, sailing westward in their viking ships, are cast ashore upon the island of Atlantis, the earthly paradise of which the Greek poets dreamed. Here they find dwelling a fortunate race of men, who in times long past have come hither from Greece and Asia Minor. The new-comers remain through the changing seasons of a year, telling stories of their northern land, and listening to the tales which the islanders have brought from their ancient home. Whatever are the sources of the stories, whether classical, western, northern, or oriental, the style in which they are

"The Earthly Paradise."

written is always that of the mediæval romances; even the metres employed are those familiar to Chaucer and the French *trouvères*. *The Earthly Paradise* is the work of a born teller of stories for the story's sake; and it is to be enjoyed very simply, with the same child-likeness of interest which went to its making.

During his later life Morris was deeply interested in Icelandic myth and legend. He translated the saga of Volsung, the greatest of northern stories, in a pseudo-archaic diction of his own contrivance. He also employed this curious style of speech in a long series of prose-romances, dealing with the primitive life of our northern ancestors; the most notable are perhaps *The House of the Wolfings*, *The Roots of the Mountains*, and *The Story of the Glittering Plain*. In them he succeeded in importing into English literature the spirit of the northern saga, not, to be sure, without some artificiality, but nevertheless with great picturesqueness and romantic charm.

Prose-Romances.

Literature was with Morris only one of many activities. His was a life of ceaseless labor in many fields of industry. He began life as an architect, abandoned this career for painting, drifted at length into the designing and manufacturing of furniture, wall-paper, and textile fabrics, and toward the close of his life turned his exhaustless energy into artistic printing and book-binding. He worked always in the spirit of a mediæval master-craftsman, to whom beauty and honesty of workmanship were a religion. His sincerity, versatility, and skill made an epoch in the history of household decoration; and as the impulse given by him has broadened and popularized itself, the surroundings of ordinary domestic life have been beautified for multitudes.

Morris's Industrial Career.

Morris's industrial experiences gradually led him to the conviction that the bases of modern commercialism were false, and he threw himself with heart and soul into the socialistic movement then beginning to gain headway in

England. Two of his romances, *News from Nowhere* and *The Dream of John Ball*, are attempts to imagine a new organization of society; and some of his later poems are chants of prophecy and hope for the longed-for era of social justice. In the prelude to *The Earthly Paradise* he calls himself "the idle singer of an empty day"; but this "idle singer" was a man who spent the greater portion of his time and strength working in shop and designing-room to make the world as it is a more livable place, and who, as experience thus gained gave him prompting, tried with all earnestness to indicate what seemed to him a higher basis for the social life of man.

His Socialism.

The Catholic reactionism of Newman, the mediævalism of Ruskin and the Preraphaelites, may be thought of as an attempt to escape from the hard material views of life forced upon the age by modern science. A somewhat similar attempt to escape from the overburdening moral seriousness and the too insistent ethical purpose of Victorian literature, may be traced in the early poetry of Algernon Charles Swinburne, especially in his first series of *Poems and Ballads* (1866). In these he deliberately and indeed ostentatiously repudiated those standards of feeling and conduct which the modern world cherishes as its hardest-won heritage from nineteen centuries of Christianity. He went back for his inspiration to paganism, and too often not to the vigorous early periods of paganism, but to its later ones, when men, callous or indifferent to the moral issues of life, sought to lose themselves in feverish self-indulgence, or to gain a ghostly solace from broodings upon death and fate and morbid love. In his later work, however, Swinburne has struck a more manly note, finding his inspiration in the ideal of freedom, personal and political; in his love of the sea, the poetry of which he has given with unexampled beauty and force; in an enthusiasm, wholesouled and generous, for great art; and in an exquis-

Swinburne: his Early Poetry of Revolt.

His Later Themes.

ite perception of the beauty and pathos of child-life. Besides his voluminous lyrical work, he has essayed epic narrative in *Tristram of Lyonesse;* and he has produced a number of dramas, some, like *Chastelard* and *Marino Faliero,* being studies in the Elizabethan manner, others, as *Atalanta in Calydon* and *Erechtheus,* being written on the Greek model.

His Verse-Mastery.

Whatever may be the intellectual or moral value of Swinburne's poetry, it is certain that as a technical master of verse, as a musician in words, he is very great. Especially in the more rapid and impetuous rhythms he has shown himself able to push out the boundaries of his art, and to enter regions of verse-music unknown before. For a union of "splendor and speed" his poetic style is unequalled by any other poet of the Victorian age. His faults are those of mannerism and device, of diffuseness and over-ornamentation, of a tendency to clothe trivial thoughts in sweeping and resounding phrase.

"Atalanta in Calydon."

His excellences are present in the highest degree, and his faults almost absent, in his masterpiece, *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865), which ranks almost on a level with the *Samson Agonistes* of Milton as an attempt to give in English verse the essential form and spirit of Greek drama. The subject of Swinburne's poem is the hunting of the wild boar in Calydon, the love of Meleager for the maiden-huntress Atalanta, and his death at the hands of his mother. The action moves with stately swiftness, in obedience to the strict canons of Greek form; the pathos is deep and genuine; and the music, especially in the choruses, is splendid in range and sweep.

Swinburne is the last of the Victorian poets, the latest survivor of the era which began with the appearance of Tennyson and Browning in the third decade of the century. As we look back over the poetry of this era, and indeed over the poetry of the whole nineteenth century, we observe in it an overwhelming preponderance of the

lyric and the narrative over the dramatic form. At the same time we cannot fail to be impressed by the fact that the poets of the century have made continual efforts to reclaim the drama for poetic uses. Wordsworth and Coleridge both made essays in the dramatic form; Shelley's *Cenci* and Byron's *Manfred* are among their most serious efforts; Keats was engaged upon a drama at the time of his death; Tennyson devoted nearly twenty years of his life to dramatic writing; Browning made repeated experiments in the dramatic form, some of them of the greatest novelty and suggestiveness; finally, Swinburne has returned again and again to the drama, until far the larger bulk of his work is in that medium. Yet all these attempts, when considered from an absolute point of view, must be deemed failures. The place which drama naturally claims has been usurped by prose fiction. The fundamental temper of the century, and its chief intellectual interests, have made against the effort to lift drama to its old position, as the great popular exponent of human life.

Nevertheless, that position is one which it must ultimately again assume; for the drama is by its nature the most vital and powerful instrument at the disposal of the worker in imaginative matter. During the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, moreover, signs have not been lacking that the ever-baffled and ever-renewed struggle of the last hundred years to create a new poetic drama, has been full of significance for the future. There are good grounds for believing that the course of poetry in the next half-century will be in a dramatic direction; and that the tentative experiments of the last two generations, toward the presentation of modern life and thought in the noblest of literary forms, will bear fruit in accomplishment.

While tracing, in this chapter and the preceding, the literary history of the nineteenth century, we have omitted all but casual mention of that form of literature which has

been most popular, most widely cultivated, and perhaps most influential of all—the novel. We must now retrace our steps, take up the novel as it was handed on from the eighteenth century, and consider its manifold development during the last hundred years.

CHAPTER XV

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: THE NOVEL

THE novel of the nineteenth century is broader and more complex than that of the eighteenth, by virtue of the greater breadth and complexity of the life which it has essayed to picture. The three departments of fiction, the romance, the realistic study of manners, and the story with a purpose, persist, but the range of each is vastly extended. The increase in knowledge of the past and of strange lands which the century has brought, has thrown open to the romanticist two great sources of material. The extension of the reading public, and the growth of curiosity concerning the circumstances of man's life under varying conditions, have caused the realistic novel to widen its scope. The world of fiction in the eighteenth century is a small one; its characters are, with a few notable exceptions, drawn from the leisure class and its dependents; they have usually no business in life beyond carrying on the action of the story. But in the nineteenth century we have novels which deal specifically with the life of the sea, the army, crime, sport, commerce, toil, politics, and the church; and with the special difficulties, dangers, and temptations which each career involves. Finally, the deeper thought of the century, bearing fruit in rapid social changes, has given to the novel of purpose greater dignity and power. The attempt to reform government and institutions, the labor movement of which Chartism was one manifestation, the so-called conflict between science and faith, all have been reflected in novels, and have in turn been influenced by

The Novel in the Nineteenth Century.

them. As the novel has thus gained in general scope, the three departments of fiction have lost in large measure their exclusive character. The romancer, in using material gathered in study or travel, has come to have something of the conscientiousness of the realist. The realist has found romantic possibilities in actual life; the advance of science, leading to startling discoveries in the physical and mental world, has given him means of arousing wonder and terror, more effective than those afforded by gothic machinery. And finally the novelist with a purpose has found in the realistic picture of things as they are, one of the most potent forces of revolution.

Maria Edgeworth.

The work of Miss Edgeworth (1767–1849) forms an interesting link between the novel of the eighteenth century and that of the nineteenth. She was a follower of Miss Burney in the effort to paint contemporary society. Like her predecessor, she shared in the rather shallow social purpose of the eighteenth century; her general aim, as set forth in the introduction to her novel *Patronage*, "the inculcation of simplicity and morality in an artificial and recklessly frivolous age," is one which Addison would have applauded. But her purpose is often more definite than this; and in several particulars her work suggests the course which the novel was to take in the future. Her long residence in Ireland interested her in social conditions in that island, and she wrote earnestly to improve them. *The Absentee* is both a satire against the Irish landlord who ruins himself in London society, and a moving picture of the evils which his folly brings on his native land. In Ireland, too, Miss Edgeworth had an opportunity to study life in what to her readers were remote conditions. Her first and best story, the little masterpiece called *Castle Rackrent* (1800), is the account of the fortunes of a decaying family, as seen through the shrewd eyes and told by the witty Irish tongue of an old servant. It has the distinction of having suggested

to Sir Walter Scott that true local color could be made as effective a background as false, and that the romantic interest could be united with an effort to portray life as it is.

The wide range of Miss Edgeworth's work emphasizes by contrast the narrow field occupied by Jane Austen (1775–1817), whose novels deal with life in the country, where the traditions of the eighteenth century lingered undisturbed. In Miss Austen's case, as earlier in Fielding's and later in Thackeray's, the realistic impulse was in part a reaction from romantic or sentimental views of life, and first expressed itself as burlesque. Two of her early stories, *Northanger Abbey* and *Sense and Sensibility*, she wrote with the obvious purpose of opposing to the impossible situations and strained emotions of Mrs. Radcliffe and her school, a humorously sensible picture of life and love as they are. From the outset Miss Austen limited her view to the world that she knew, and the influences that she saw at work. She was the daughter of a clergyman, and except for an occasional visit to a watering-place like Bath or Lyme, she spent her youth in a country parish. Her acquaintance included country families, clergymen, and naval officers,—for her brothers were in the navy. The chief business of these people, as Miss Austen saw them, was attention to social duties; and their chief interest was matrimony. This world Miss Austen represents in her novels; outside of it she never steps. And even in this petty world she takes account chiefly of its pettiness. The great things of life, passion and moral purpose, the interests of the artist, the lover, the saint, may as well be presented on a small stage as on a large one, as well amid the society of a cathedral city as in London; but these things did not enter into Miss Austen's experience, and she had no great insight or imaginative sympathy to carry her beyond her own observation. There is scarcely any feeling for external nature in her stories, except in *Persuasion*, the latest of them. There is

Jane Austen.

little passion; the language of emotion is usually forced and conventional. "Sense is the foundation on which everything good may be based," she says in *Sense and Sensibility*. Her view of evil is superficial, for her attitude of satiric observation left her insensitive to the significance of moral effort. One suspects that her estimate of life was not very different from that expressed by Mr. Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*; "For what do we live but to make sport for our neighbors and to laugh at them in our turn?"

Her Limitations.

But if her range was thus limited, within it she was supreme. Absolutely sure of her material, undistracted by external interests, she wrote with a singular freedom from uncertainty; and her novels have, in consequence, an exactness of structure and a symmetry of form which are to be found more often in French literature than in English. Of this precision *Pride and Prejudice* is an admirable example. There the plot is the chief interest; simple, but pervading the entire book; controlling every incident, but itself depending for its outcome upon the development or revelation of the principal characters. Surrounding these characters is the world of provincial folk which Miss Austen handled with such brilliancy,—cynical Mr. Bennet and his fatuous wife; Mary Bennet, the pedant, and Lydia, the flirt; Mr. Collins, the type of pretentious conceit, and Sir William Lucas, of feeble dulness. These "humors" Miss Austen develops chiefly in speech, by her wonderful faculty of saying the thing that belongs to the character at the moment. Not only is the proper sentiment caught, but the turn of phrase, the manner, almost the modulation of the voice. And not only is this true of the limited characters who react always in the same way; but also in the sustained scenes between the more developed persons, where the dialogue is more highly charged, Miss Austen shows dramatic power of the highest order. One

Her Excellence.

of the best of these scenes is that between Elizabeth Bennet and Lady Catherine de Burgh, in which Elizabeth like a good swordsman, light on her feet and ever ready, completely disarms her lumbering opponent. Miss Austen's later stories, *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*, are longer and slightly more elaborate than *Pride and Prejudice*, but in them the essentials of her art are still the same; a well-defined story, growing naturally out of the influence of character on character, and developed in the midst of a society full of the mild humors of provincial life.

Miss Austen shows to the full the realist's tendency to accept the world in an ironical spirit, and to find in it such amusement as it offers. The romantic impulse to seek for enjoyment in a world of greater interest or of greater opportunity for imagination, is brilliantly represented in the works of the greatest of English romancers, Sir Walter Scott.

Sir Walter Scott.

Scott began his career as a novelist late in life. It was not until he was forty-three that, finding his vogue as a poet diminishing before Byron's popularity, he finished a tale that he had begun some nine years before. This was published anonymously in 1814 under the name *Waverley*, a title which was applied to the long series of novels which followed. Some of these, like *Guy Mannering* (1815), *The Antiquary* (1816), *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818), deal with the past of Scotland; others, like *Ivanhoe* (1820), *Kenilworth* (1821), *The Fortunes of Nigel* (1822) are concerned with English history; several, like *Quentin Durward* (1823) and *The Talisman* (1825) transfer the scene to the Continent. In 1826 a printing house, of which Scott was a member, failed for £117,000, the whole of which debt he felt bound to assume. He wrote his latest books to get money to discharge this obligation, and had actually paid more than half when he died in 1832. The rest was paid by the sale of the copyrights on his earlier books.

Scott's life was a blending of the old and the new. He tried to be both a feudal lord and a modern business man, and both attempts are curiously connected with his literary career. He wrote partly for the pleasure of creating in fiction the feudal ideal that he sought to realize in his life at Abbotsford, partly for the money with which to sustain that experiment. Part of his success in his own day must be accounted for by the fact that his vital interests were those which his fellow-men could comprehend. Scott was not a romanticist in the sense in which Coleridge was, or Shelley. He did not desire spiritual freedom; he was not conscious of the trammels of an ordered, conventional life; he had no dislike of the political and social world as it existed, no leanings toward revolution. But on the other hand, he had in his blood an ardent love for Scotland, and an intimate sympathy with Scotchmen; he had, too, a fascinated view toward the past. Thus he represented the simple, permanent elements of romanticism, the elements which his public were prepared to accept; and thus to an audience which neglected Wordsworth and flouted Shelley, Scott became the prophet of a new literary faith.

Scott's Romanticism.

His native land and its people Scott learned to know at first hand, in his frequent journeys through the Border Country and the Highlands. He was the first British novelist to make a background actually studied from nature a pervading and essential element in his work. His descriptions of scenery are, it is true, old-fashioned in method, unreasonably long and full of detail; but they have an exact and vivid realism that goes far to reward the reader's patience. Moreover, the frequency with which the place determines the event shows that in Scott's drama scene was a vital element, not a mere decorative drop-curtain which interrupts the action.

His Use of Scene.

The natural background in Scott's work is, however, less

wonderful than the human. It is noteworthy that, even as early as *Waverley*, his first novel, Scott recognized his chief strength to lie in his knowledge of Scotch types. After some hesitation at the outset of the story, he starts his hero for Scotland, and plunges him into a society composed of Baron Bradwardine, Laird Balmawhapple, and Baillie Macwheeble, with David Gellatley and Old Janet for dependents. These local types, which Scott drew so abundantly, are treated broadly for the humor and the pathos of humanity warped by circumstances into a hundred fantastic forms, but capable of sometimes throwing itself into an attitude of noble disinterestedness, of dignified endurance, or of tragic despair. When the historic drama of the rising of 1745, which draws Waverley into its sweep, has played itself out, and the pale love story has been tamely concluded, the figure that remains with us as we close the book, is that of Evan Dhu, the humble follower of the Highland chief Vich Ian Vohr, standing at the condemnation of his master, and pledging himself and six of the clan to die in his stead. "If the Saxon gentlemen are laughing," he said, "because a poor man, such as me, thinks my life or the life of six of my degree is worth that of Vich Ian Vohr, it's like enough they may be very right; but if they laugh because they think I would not keep my word, and come back to redeem him, they ken neither the heart of a Hielandman, nor the honour of a gentleman." Among such types as these we look for Scott's greatest characters: Edie Ochiltree in *The Antiquary*, Baillie Jarvie in *Rob Roy*, Peter Peebles in *Redgauntlet*, and many more who stand out from the novels as complete and substantive figures in which the race of Scotchmen has expressed itself forever. Only once, however, did Scott trust entirely to this element of native strength. In *The Heart of Midlothian*, he dispenses altogether with the aristocratic heroine, throws aside the conventional plot, and gives us instead the story

His Characters.

of Jeanie Deans, one of the most humanly moving to be found in all fiction.

It is, moreover, from local types which he knew, that Scott derives his most impressive appeals to the sense of terror and mystery, already awakened in the reading public by the gothic romancers. The fantastic figures which start out of the background, Madge Wildfire in *The Heart of Midlothian,* Meg Merrilies in *Guy Mannering,* and Norna of the Fitful Head in *The Pirate,* constitute far more powerful romantic elements than are afforded by his rather timid use of the supernatural.

The material which Scott gained at first hand from the Scotland of his own day, he supplemented by a very diligent and human, if somewhat unscientific, antiquarianism. In his childhood he delighted to hear of the past from survivors of it. Of his mother's conversation he wrote, "If I have been able to do anything in the way of painting the past times it is very much from the studies with which she presented me." Later he drew on old books and letters to supply what was lacking in personal tradition. Such intercourse with the past widened his knowledge of men, and gave him material for his historical portraits. It also provided him with many of those incidents, by means of which he gives to a character or to a scene its final reality. Scott was often slipshod in putting his stories together as wholes, but he was consummate in his power to place his characters in a picturesquely significant setting, and to draw from the interplay between his persons and his scene action so appropriate to the dramatic situation that it seems inevitable. A remarkable instance of this faculty occurs in *Old Mortality,* where Morton visits Burley in the cave reached by a single tree-trunk bridging the chasm of a waterfall. As Morton approaches he hears the shouts and screams of the old Covenanter, in whom religious fury has become insanity; and at length he sees the fearful figure of Burley

His Love of the Past.

His Use of Incident.

in strife with the fiends which beset him. The effect of threatening scenery and of the terror of madness is brought to a focus, as it were, at the instant when Burley sends the tree crashing into the abyss, leaving Morton to jump for his life.

Scott's stronghold was his native land, in the period which he could reach by fresh tradition, that is, the century before his birth. Here his historical portraits are wonderfully definite; and his presentation of historical movements, like that of the Covenanters or the Jacobites, as seen in the high light of individual experience, is full of insight and imagination. As he exhausted this material, or felt the need of stimulating his audience with variety, he went more and more into other fields, and relied more and more on formal history for his material. In his English and continental novels, literary inspiration and study never quite took the place of what was almost first-hand knowledge in the Scotch. Yet his treatment of Richard's crusade in *The Talisman*, or of Louis XI.'s struggle with Charles the Bold in *Quentin Durward*, or of Elizabeth's coquetries in *Kenilworth*, testify to his power of using history to give interest and significance to his action and characters, or, in other words, of making it contributory to the art of fiction.

His Use of History.

Although since Scott's day nearly every novelist of note has attempted something in the historical field, the romantic temper, which first commended historical material to the novelist, gave place, after Scott's death, to a different mood. Scott's romantic pictures of the feudal past were flattering to a people struggling, as they thought, to preserve the relics of that past from the engulfing revolution. But after the immediate effect of the Napoleonic War had passed away, new ideas began to make progress in England, broadening the current of English thought and life. This broadening is reflected in the work of two writers whose productions cover chronologically the middle period of the

century, Benjamin Disraeli (1804–1881) and Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803–1873). Disraeli began his career with the publication of *Vivian Grey* (1826), in which a new type of hero is presented, the man of the world,—a sign that the sinister, romantic rebel of Byron's tragedies had had his day. Edward Bulwer began his career by a direct attack on Byronism. In *Pelham, the Adventures of a Gentleman* (1828), the hero is a young dandy, who learns worldly wisdom from a Chesterfieldian mother, and who, armed with unlimited conceit and self-possession, brings the world to his feet. According to Bulwer's view, society is too easily conquered to make rebellion worth while; and the success of his book proved him right.

Disraeli and Bulwer-Lytton.

Bulwer's first novels illustrate the later development of those gothic tendencies which had manifested themselves in fiction at the end of the eighteenth century as one symptom of the romantic revival. In many of his novels, notably in *Pelham* and in *Lucretia*, he plays upon his reader's sense of the terrible, by his pictures of criminal life. But he infuses these pictures, as Dickens did a little later, with a definite purpose, treating his outlaws as victims of society. *Paul Clifford*, for example, of which the hero is a highwayman, was written "to draw attention to two errors in our penal institutions, viz.:—a vicious prison discipline and a sanguinary penal code." The other prominent gothic element in Bulwer's work is a pseudo-scientific use of the supernatural, of which *Zanoni* (1845) furnishes the most elaborate example.

Bulwer's Romanticism.

Naturally, with the success of Scott before him, Bulwer essayed the historical novel. In 1834, after elaborate preparation, he published *The Last Days of Pompeii*, and later *Rienzi*, *The Last of the Barons*, and *Harold*; in all of these he tried, much more consciously than Scott, to make the novel serve the purpose of the historian. Under the impulse of Thackeray's

His Historical Novels.

success Bulwer turned to modern life, in *The Caxtons* (1849) and *My Novel* (1853). His realism is relieved, however, by the introduction of ideal characters, which he touches with whimsical quality in the manner of Sterne, perhaps realizing that goodness is rendered more convincing by being made a trifle absurd. Altogether, with due deduction for the affected, the sensational, the sentimental in Bulwer's novels, the fact remains that his versatility and his long-continued energy make him a useful sign of the shifting literary currents during the middle years of the century.

His Later Works.

Charles Dickens (1812–1870) must always be one of the most striking figures in the history of English literature, on account of the dramatic nature of his success. He started from the humblest position in life; when he was ten years old he was at work in a blacking warehouse, sleeping beneath a counter, and spending his Sundays with his family in Marshalsea Prison, where his father was confined for debt. Yet before he was thirty he was a great writer; and before he was forty, a notable public man. No writer in English ever gathered with a fuller hand the rewards of the literary calling. It is true, other writers have made more money, or have won peerages; but none has had in his lifetime so wide and intensely loyal a personal following; none has had in addition to money, friends, and fame, the peculiar tribute which came to Dickens from vast audiences gathered together, not once or twice, but hundreds of times, in scores of cities, to testify by "roaring seas of applause" to his personal triumph. In middle life Dickens began to give semi-dramatic public readings from his works, and these grew to be his chief interest. The strain and excitement wore him out. It is a circumstance perhaps as tragic in its way as that which shadows the close of Scott's life, that this personal triumph was the direct cause of Dickens's death. Scott died, broken by the effort to retrieve by liter-

Charles Dickens.

ature the effects of failure in life. Dickens died forty years later, worn out by the effort to gather in life the rewards of literature.

Dickens's peculiar triumph calls attention to the prime fact in his authorship, his nearness to his public. He began his career as a reporter, in the profession which is most immediately of the people. He was later an editor of magazines, and even, for a short time, of a great daily newspaper. But though necessity made him a journalist, he wished to be an actor. As a young man he tried to get a position at Covent Garden Theatre. For years he was the leading spirit in a famous company of amateurs who played in various cities of England; and as we have seen, his chief interest came to be his readings. These two professional instincts account for much in Dickens's work. As a reporter and as an editor he studied his public; as an actor, he taught himself to play upon it, through his writings and his dramatic readings from them, with incomparable skill.

His Training.

It was while Dickens, then about twenty, was a reporter, that he began to write sketches of London life for various newspapers. From his success with these came, in 1836, an engagement to write the letterpress for a series of cartoons representing the humors of sporting life. For this purpose he invented the "Pickwick Club," which at once made a popular hit. The death of the artist who was engaged upon the drawings left Dickens free to widen the scope of the adventures of the club, and to add other characters without stint. The complete result was a great book, formless as to plot, crowded with humorous figures. These figures are given with broadly exaggerated traits, as if Dickens had always in mind the cartoon which was to accompany the text. They talk freely, not to say inexhaustibly, and all differently. But the author's chief resource is his faculty for bringing his caricatures into contact with the actual

"Pickwick Papers."

world, in situations that expose their oddities in high relief. Mr. Tupman as a lover, Mr. Winkle as a duellist or a sportsman, Mr. Pickwick in a breach of promise suit with the Widow Bardell, the Pickwick Club contending with a recalcitrant horse, the Reverend Mr. Stiggins drunk at a temperance meeting—these incongruities are narrated in a style always copious, but often rapid and piquant.

In his later novels Dickens improved on his first attempts. He continued to be a caricaturist, to rely on distortions and exaggerations of feature or manner; but his range of effects became broader, and his figures more significant. Micawber in *David Copperfield,* "waiting for something to turn up," Sairy Gamp in *Martin Chuzzlewit,* haunted by the mythical Mrs. Harris, 'umble Uriah Heap, sanctimonious Pecksniff, cheerful Mark Tapley, all have distinct individuality, yet all label so conveniently common attitudes and habits of mind that we use their names freely as categories.

His Humors.

In *Pickwick* Dickens is purely a humorist; in the novels which followed he enlarged enormously the sources of his power over his audience. By the use of the same method which he had employed in his humors, he created figures of a different sort, to excite not laughter but loathing and terror. In the portrayal of these types also he gained subtlety with practice. Fagin and Sykes in *Oliver Twist* (1838), Quilp, the dwarf, in *Old Curiosity Shop* (1841), are examples of rather crude methods of exciting physical horror; monstrous as they are, they do not haunt the reader with the terrible suggestion of inhumanity that lurks behind the placid, smiling face of Mme. Defarge in *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), as she sits in front of the guillotine, knitting, and counting the heads as they fall. In the stories just mentioned Dickens showed again his fertility in inventing situations, using his histrionic power as freely in melodrama as in farce. The behavior of Fagin at his trial and in prison is the conception of an actor,

His Darker Characters.

careful to make every gesture, every expression, tell on his audience.

A third type of character which Dickens developed, and which in his time made immensely for his popularity, was that of the victim of society,—usually a child. The possibilities of childhood for romance or pathos had been suggested by Shakespeare, by Fielding, and by Blake; but none of these had brought children into the very centre of the action, or had made them highly individual. In his second novel, Dickens made his story centre about a child, Oliver Twist, and from that time forth children were expected and necessary characters in his novels. Little Nell, Florence Dombey, David Copperfield, stand out in celestial innocence and goodness, in contrast with the evil creatures whose persecution they suffer for a season. And further, they represent in most telling form the complaint of the individual against society. For with Dickens the private cruelty which his malign characters inflict, is almost always connected with social wrong. Bumble's savage blow at Oliver Twist asking for more food, Squeers's wicked exploitation of his pupils in *Nicholas Nickleby*, are carried back and laid at the door of society. The championship of the individual against institutions, which had been a leading motive in later eighteenth century fiction, had been checked by the reaction against the French Revolution; but in Dickens's day the "redress of wrongs" had become again a great public movement. The workings of later romanticism had begun to be reflected in a popular distrust of governmental methods, a kind of sentimental hatred of organized authority. To this feeling Dickens constantly appealed. In nearly all his books there is a definite attack upon some legal or social evil: in *Oliver Twist*, upon the workhouse; in *Bleak House*, upon the chancery courts; in *Little Dorrit*, upon the harsh laws governing debt. Undoubtedly there was something theatrical in Dickens's adoption of social wrong as a motive in

His Humanitarianism.

fiction, but there was also much that was sincere. He had himself known the lot of the persecuted; at the root of his zeal for reform was the memory of his own bitter childhood.

The types of character already discussed were sufficient to sustain the movement of Dickens's earlier books. These were usually simple in structure. His favorite authors were Smollett and LeSage, and he seems to have been disposed to build his own novels like theirs, on the picaresque plan. In most of them we begin with the hero in childhood, and follow his personal adventures into the thick of a plot involving the popular romantic material of the day, kidnapping, murder, mob-justice, and other incidents of criminal life. When the author needs the usual characters of the novel, a pair of conventional love-makers for example, he gives us figures as weak and unnatural as were many of Scott's titular heroes. In his later books, however, he gained the power of constructing elaborate plots, and of creating characters of heroic dignity and tragic intensity, such as Sidney Carton in *The Tale of Two Cities*, and Lady Dedlock in *Bleak House* (1853). These are the most enduringly powerful of his novels, but they are not those upon which his fame rests. Dickens is remembered not as a dramatic artist in the novel form, but as a showman of wonderful resources. He is master of a vast and fascinating stage, crowded with farcical characters; with grotesque and terrible creatures, more devils than men; and with the touching forms of little children. The action is sometimes merry, sometimes exciting, sometimes pathetic. We have laughter, and horror, and tears; but the prevailing atmosphere is one of cheerfulness, as befits a great Christmas pantomime.

His Plots.

Dickens and Bulwer have in common their frequent use of gothic material, their tendency to seek literary effects of the sentimental kind, and their disposition to regard the

novel seriously as a social force destined to high purposes. A vigorous reaction against all this was led by William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–1863). Thackeray was an Anglo-Indian, born in Calcutta. After a short career at Cambridge, and some desultory art study, he turned to literature. His first work consisted of light essays, sketches of travel, and burlesques, in which the weaknesses of the romantic school are cleverly hit off in imitations of Scott, Bulwer, and Disraeli. His first long story *Catherine* (1839), is the picture of a female rogue, drawn on the picaresque plan with unsympathetic realism, and intended as an antidote to the sentimental treatment of criminals as exemplified by Bulwer's Clifford, and Dickens's Nancy. *Barry Lyndon* (1844) is likewise a picaresque story, being a brilliant account of the exploits of an eighteenth century adventurer.

William Makepeace Thackeray.

Thackeray gave his realistic theories larger scope in *Vanity Fair*, written between 1846 and 1848. This, like most of his succeeding novels, he published in parts, seldom supplying the matter for the forthcoming chapter until the last possible moment. Naturally, the story is not a model of structure in the narrow technical sense; but it may be said that this rather loose method of working suited not only Thackeray's temperament but also his artistic problem. For Thackeray's realism is that of the observer, not that of the analyst. He never isolates a single case and studies it with long, close patience. On the contrary, he sees life with the large vision of a man of the world. To have confined his multitude of characters within the limits of what is technically called a plot, would have introduced an element of unreality into his book. The action of *Vanity Fair* revolves about the heroines, Amelia Sedley and Becky Sharp. The two women in their opposition are admirable foils; Amelia mild and incapable—a parasite, the author calls her—living on the chivalrous protection of Dobbin; Becky,

The Structure of his Novels.

keen and competent, making her world for herself, levying tribute on every man who crosses her path. The two stories begin together, and Thackeray supplies a link between them later in Jos Sedley; but in the end he gives over the attempt to unite them, and lets the two sets of characters diverge in his novel as they must have done in life.

One mark of Thackeray's realism is his refusal to take his art seriously. In his view an author is but the master of a set of puppets with which he can represent real life, if he please, but over whose movements it is absurd to pretend that he has not absolute control. Hence Thackeray jests at his art in a tone that was most unpleasant to minor craftsmen. This tone has done him a disservice with later readers, and belies the essential importance of his work; for though the world which he pictured is a bit antique in our eyes, its problems are ours, and granting the thirty years' difference in time, Thackeray treats them in a way as significant for us as that of Meredith or Ibsen.

His View of his Art.

The sceptical persiflage with which Thackeray treats his characters indicates his attitude toward the world which he pictures. In the metaphor of the puppets lurks a gleam of the satire which Swift showed in his sketch of society as Lilliput. The title too, *Vanity Fair*,—Bunyan's fair, "where is sold all sorts of vanity, and where is to be seen juggling, cheats, games, plays, fools, apes, knaves, rogues, and that of every kind," —suggests something of contempt if not of bitterness. The roguishness and weakness of Thackeray's puppets has long been a ground for calling their showman a cynic; but Thackeray's cynicism is strongly tempered with tolerance and with pity. Dickens draws his pathos from the spectacle of ideal innocence exposed to the evils of the world; but Thackeray makes no less pitiful the sorrows of men and women who are themselves sinful, weak, and

His Attitude toward the World.

stupid. Becky's husband Rawdon Crawley is not an admirable figure, yet we are sorry for him. George and Amelia are both in their way contemptible, yet the scene of their parting is wringing with tenderness. And in the great book which followed *Vanity Fair*, *The Newcomes*, Thackeray has given a picture of human imperfection so inexpressibly touching, that every reader believes the story of the novelist's coming from his work-room one day, sobbing, "I have killed Colonel Newcome." Thackeray is merciful toward the feeble, flawed souls that he portrays, because gentleness was a part of his nature. Disillusioned as to most of the pretentious virtues of the world, he still believed in kindness, in the instinctive goodness of one being toward another, and he exemplified this belief in his books as in his life.

His Use of History.

The importance of the historical element in fiction after Scott is shown by the fact that even the petty world of *Vanity Fair* is disturbed by a great national crisis; but Thackeray, instead of using Waterloo to impose dignity and splendor upon his story, characteristically gives us a "back-stairs" view of war. We follow the battle, not in the thought of Napoleon or the Duke, but chiefly as it is reflected in the fears of the wretched Jos Sedley, in the hopes of his servant Isidore, and in the calculations of Becky Sharp; chiefly, but not wholly: for there is poor, almost abandoned Amelia "praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart." Thackeray is interested in famous events and persons because of the light which they throw upon the common affairs of men. Even in his historical novels he is a realist, seeking to recall the world of the eighteenth century, not in distant splendor, but in the actual forms in which it realized itself to a contemporary. In *Henry Esmond* (1852), however, as in *Vanity Fair*, Thackeray's own temperament is to be reckoned with. His sympathy with the preceding century gives to his treat-

ment of it a warmth and brilliancy which makes the most realistic of historical novels also the most poetic.

In *Henry Esmond* we follow the hero's childhood at Castlewood, in the mysterious atmosphere of plotting Papists; and his youth in the London of Queen Anne, where the persons and names of Addison, Steele, Prior, Swift, Fielding, Atterbury, meet us as casually as those of modern celebrities to-day. We see him take part in the wonderful victories of Marlborough, and in the daring game which the Pretender played for his crown. The vanished world lives for us in character and in episode; lives with a dignity and richness of conception and style that shows Thackeray to have been, when he chose, the greatest artist among the English novelists. In his masterpiece he is writing, not as a careless, rather lazy master of a puppet-show, but in the person of the chivalrous Esmond. Every incident and description, then, must reflect his hero's character in some touch of nobility or of charm. In Esmond's repulsion from Marlborough, in his devotion to Castlewood and his son, in his passion for Beatrix, and in his love for Lady Castlewood, there is the constant revelation of an honorable and loyal man. When he is telling us of the quarrel between Marlborough and Webb, there is that in their manner which reminds us that it is a gentleman's story. When he surrenders his birthright, property, and name, he bears himself with a simplicity and a modesty which are in keeping with a great renunciation. The style itself, marvellous in its technical approximation to the manner of the period described, is yet more wonderful in its reflection of Esmond's personality. When he leaves Castlewood or stands at his mother's grave, when he bends beside the body of his dear lord, run through by the villain Mohun, always his utterance is perfect in its intimacy, its simplicity, its distant, haunting rhythm. Even in a detail of the picture of Lady Castlewood vanishing from Esmond's sight in anger, Thackeray's distinction

"Henry Esmond."

is evident. "He saw her retreating, the taper lighting up her marble face, her scarlet lip quivering, and her shining golden hair." Had he written only this scene, only this sentence, he might have been called a master. As it is he is the greatest writer who has used English in fiction.

In his return to realism Thackeray found an industrious follower in Anthony Trollope (1815–1882). The latter adopted his master's flippant view of the novel expressed in *Vanity Fair*, but unlike Thackeray he never succeeded as an artist in rising above it. A novel should be written, he says frankly, to amuse young people of both sexes, and there should be nothing too unpleasant in it; at least, he promises the reader on one occasion, he will never let such a thing happen in a novel of his. Trollope's fame began with a series of novels dealing with the life among the clergy of a cathedral city. *The Warden* (1855), the first of these, was followed by *Barchester Towers* (1857),—generally considered his masterpiece,—by *Framley Parsonage* (1861), and by *The Last Chronicle of Barset* (1867). He also developed a series of political novels, and treated various aspects of English commercial and country life. In his wide survey of social conditions in the middle and upper classes of England, he comes nearer than any other English novelist to fulfilling the vast programmes of the French realists, Balzac and Zola. Trollope was a man of great industry, in every sense a professional novelist, writing a daily allowance, and often keeping two or three novels going at once. Much of his work is perfunctory, but at his best he has a power of creating figures which have an astonishing air of life. Of these Mrs. Proudie, the bishop's wife, who rages through several books, is the most notable.

Anthony Trollope.

Charles Reade.

As Trollope may be called a satellite of Thackeray, so Charles Reade (1814–1884) in a sense shines with the reflected light of Dickens. Like Dickens, Reade had the temperament of a romanticist; but beginning

his career at a time when realism was the literary shibboleth, he made it his effort not only to discover the romantic elements in real life and to treat them in the romantic manner, but also to satisfy himself and his readers of their truth by elaborate documentary evidence. Reade had an immense fondness for the stage, chiefly, perhaps, because in the actor's life he found the romance which he was always seeking. He wrote numerous plays; and one of his best known stories, *Peg Woffington* (1852), is a story of stage life. His serious discipleship of Dickens appears in his novels with purpose. *Put Yourself in his Place* (1870) is a story designed to reflect the wrongs which trades unions inflicted upon the individual workman. In *A Terrible Temptation* is a novelist, a student of modern social conditions, to whom the oppressed have recourse, and who uses his power to enlist public sympathy in their behalf and to overawe the oppressor. Reade's masterpiece is *The Cloister and the Hearth*, a novel of the period of the German Renaissance, with the father of the great Erasmus as its hero. To the construction of this work Reade brought his laborious method of getting up his facts, but in spite of its learning the book is one of the three or four best historical novels since Scott.

Charlotte Brontë.

Thackeray as a realist and moralist had an earnest sympathizer in a writer who was by circumstances a romanticist. Charlotte Brontë (1816–1855) grew up in the Yorkshire parsonage of her father, with such experience as came from country boarding-schools, a year in Brussels, and her own family life with its terrible succession of tragedies,—the death of her mother, the blindness of her father, the death of her sisters, and the ruin of her brother through dissipation. She and her sisters wrote for their own amusement, inventing scenes and characters to supplement the melancholy resources of the life that they knew. This perfectly natural romanticism led Emily Brontë to write one of the most

strangely powerful of all novels, *Wuthering Heights* (1847), in which the hero and heroine love and torture each other in a world of their own, remote from the real world, both social and psychological.

"Jane Eyre." In Charlotte Brontë the imagination never attained to such tragic splendor as in her sister; her novels are, however, more nearly in contact with actual life. The first of them, *Jane Eyre* (1847), opens with a transcript from Miss Brontë's own life at boarding-school, but the heroine soon passes beyond the world of the author's experience into the romantic realm of her longing and imagination. Undoubtedly, there is much that is second-rate in the story. The hero of Jane's adoration, Rochester, is an impossible character. His mad wife is a literary inheritance from Mrs. Radcliffe. The incidents reveal almost pathetically Miss Brontë's ignorance of life and her lack of power to measure probability. But the heroine is a genuine woman. Psychologically she is a study of the author's inner life, and her romantic experience is symbolical of the attempt which Charlotte and her sisters made to enlarge and color their oppressive little world with the spaces and splendors of the imagination.

It was the honesty of Miss Brontë's romanticism that made *Jane Eyre* successful both with the critics and with the public. Under the advice of the critics, Miss Brontë abandoned gothic machinery in her later books, *Shirley* (1849) and *Villette* (1853), and fell back on her own life in Yorkshire and in Brussels. Nevertheless these books bear constant witness to the lack of harmony between her artistic purpose and the means which her experience afforded her of carrying out this purpose with success. For while her experience in life was limited, and constantly tended to throw her back on romantic invention, she was in purpose a realist, bent on dealing with things as they are, and on making them better. She dedicated *Jane Eyre* to Thackeray, in terms which show the

Her Later Works.

amount of moral energy which she possessed. Unluckily her life did not bring her into contact with large projects of reform. As a moralist and as an artist it was her fortune to deal, in spite of all her efforts to the contrary, with the petty or the unreal.

In one direction Miss Brontë's experience was adequate, namely, in her contact with nature. From her books one comes to know how largely in her life the clouds, the ragged hills, the wide spaces of the Yorkshire moors under sunset or moonlight, made up for the inadequacy of human society and interests. It is true, she has the gothic trick of setting off her incidents by a sympathetic background; but in a deeper fashion than this she makes nature enter into the warp and woof of her stories through the part which it plays in the most essential element in them, the inner life of her heroines.

Her Feeling to Nature.

Charles Kingsley (1819–1875) shared Miss Brontë's serious view of fiction; and his position in the world was such as to connect him with large issues. He was a clergyman, Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, a leader in the "Broad Church" movement, the friend of Maurice, Tennyson, and Stanley, and somewhat later of Carlyle, of whose strenuous philosophy of life he was a sort of popular exponent. His novels fall into two divisions. In the earlier ones, *Yeast* (1848) and *Alton Locke* (1850), Kingsley gives a view of the problems which perplexed men's minds in the middle years of the century, the years of the Catholic revival and of Chartism; and he tries to point out a middle course between Catholicism and scepticism in religion, between Toryism and revolution in politics. In the second division he carries his purpose into the historical novel. *Hypatia* (1853) is a study of the struggle between Christianity and Paganism, in Alexandria, during the fifth century. His masterpiece, *Westward Ho* (1855), is a vigorous story of the times of Elizabeth, depicting the English con-

Charles Kingsley.

test with Spain by sea and in America. In both these novels, Kingsley sought to develop his ideal of manhood, a compound of physical energy and intellectual moderation to which he felt in some way that the Catholic Church was dangerous. In both he displays many of the qualities of the artist. His scene has the vividness and splendor of painting, and his incident, though at times childishly unconvincing, is often superbly dramatic.

Mrs. Gaskell.

The religious and social problems of England found a less passionate exponent in Mrs. Elizabeth Gaskell (1810–1865), the wife of a Unitarian clergyman in Manchester. Her life brought her into contact with the industrial and social difficulties growing out of the struggle between master and workman; and these she treated with great skill in *Mary Barton* (1848), and in *North and South* (1855). In *Cranford* (1853), her best known book, she entered a different field, that of realistic observation developed in a somewhat fantastic setting.

George Eliot.

Kingsley and Mrs. Gaskell connect fiction with the intellectual and moral development of England, a connection which is emphasized further by the work of Mary Ann Evans, or George Eliot (1819–1880). She was born in 1819 and grew up in the years when, under the influence of scientific speculation, the English mind was casting loose from its theological moorings. She was for a time assistant editor of the Westminster Review, the organ of the free thinkers; and in this position she met John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, G. H. Lewes, and other liberals. After her union with Mr. Lewes she began to experiment with fiction, her first story, "The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton," appearing in Blackwood's Magazine in 1856. She added to this story two others of moderate length, and republished all three in 1858 as *Scenes of Clerical Life*. The next year she published her first novel, *Adam Bede*, and it was evident that a new writer and a great one had appeared.

George Eliot's starting-point in *Adam Bede* was an incident in the life of her aunt, who once accompanied to the scaffold a poor girl condemned for child-murder. This aunt was the original of Dinah Morris, the woman preacher who rides in the hangman's cart with Hetty Sorrel. Hetty's aunt, Mrs. Poyser, is said to show some traits of George Eliot's mother; and Caleb Garth, in a later book, *Middlemarch*, was drawn from her father. Indeed, in her realism she was in large measure dependent on the material of her own early life in Warwickshire and Derbyshire. Her earlier books abound in local studies of charming humor. The elder Tullivers, the Gleggs and the Pullets, and Bob Jakin, in *The Mill on the Floss*, are as definite as Scott's or Miss Austen's minor characters. The chief sign of decline in George Eliot's last novel, *Daniel Deronda*, is the attempt to replace these vigorous living beings with badly imagined puppets like the Meyricks. She had used up the material of her youth, and found nothing in her brilliant life of culture and travel to take its place.

As a Realist.

Adam Bede is the most natural of George Eliot's books, simple in problem, direct in action, with the freshness and strength of the Derbyshire landscape and character and speech in its pages. Its successor, *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), shows signs of a growing perplexity on the part of the author, of a hesitation between her art and her message. For George Eliot was more than an observer; she was also a scientist and a moralist. She was not content to picture human life as it appears. She tried to pierce behind the shows of things, and to reveal the forces by which they are controlled. Accordingly she analyzes her characters. In the case of the simple types this analysis takes the form of comment, rapid, incisive, and quite convincing. She tells us, for example, that Mrs. Tulliver was like the gold-fish who continues to butt his head against the encircling globe; and at once the type of cheerful incapacity to learn by experience

is fixed before us forever. In the case of the more conscious, developed characters, her analysis is more elaborate and more sustained. For her heroines George Eliot drew largely upon her own spiritual experience, and this personal psychology she supplemented by wide reading, especially of the literature of confessions. In this way she gained an extraordinary vividness in portraying the inner life. Her most characteristic passages are those in which she follows the ebb and flow of decision in a character's mind, dwelling on the triumph or defeat of a personality in a drama where there is but one actor. Such a drama is that which Maggie Tulliver plays out in her heart, torn between the impulse to take her joy as it offers, and the unconquerable conviction that she cannot seek her own happiness by sacrificing others.

As a Psychologist.

Further it is to be noted that George Eliot never lets her case drop with the individual analysis. She always strives to make her case typical, to show that the personal result is in accordance with a general law. Dorothea's defeat and Lydgate's failure in *Middlemarch*, Tito's degeneration in *Romola*, Gwendolen's humiliation and recovery in *Daniel Deronda*, are all represented as occurring in obedience to laws of the ethical world, as immutable as those of the physical. This is George Eliot's chief function as a writer, the interpretation of the world in terms of morality. She does not deal with party questions, nor primarily with industrial or social problems. Her ethical motive is a broader one than the emancipation of thought, or the formulation of a political programme. It is to show how, in obedience to law, character grows or decays; how a single fault or flaw brings suffering and death, and throws a world into ruin; how, on the other hand, there is a making perfect through suffering, a regeneration through sin itself, a hope for the world through the renunciation and self-sacrifice of the individual. "It is a blind self-seeking," she tells us through Dinah Morris,

As a Moralist.

"which wants to be freed from the sorrow wherewith the whole creation groaneth and travaileth," for, as she says again, "those who live and suffer may sometimes have the blessedness of being a salvation." It is this possibility of blessedness which in George Eliot's view is the compensation for evil; that we may

> "Be to other souls
> The cup of strength in some great agony"

in part makes up for the presence of that agony in the world. Whatever be the scientific value of a system of ethics which makes the service of humanity the highest reason for doing right, or whatever the disparity between the novelist's art and the presentation of such a system, George Eliot's work represents the highest and sincerest development of fiction with a purpose.

It is significant of the slow growth of George Meredith's literary reputation that, though we think of him as the successor of George Eliot, his first novel appeared before hers. He published *The Shaving of Shagpat* in 1856. *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* appeared in 1859, and other works at intervals of two or three years down to 1895; of these, *Beauchamp's Career* (1876), *The Egoist* (1879), *Diana of the Crossways* (1885), and *One of Our Conquerors* (1890), are the most noteworthy. George Meredith.

Meredith, like George Eliot, is a psychologist, and in some sort a moralist. But while George Eliot tries to make her characters individual, and then to make their lives typical by showing how the laws of the moral world get themselves enforced, as it were, automatically, Meredith tends to make his characters types, embodiments of the particular quality which he is interested in exploiting. Again, George Eliot works through tragedy, Meredith often through comedy; the one scourges evil-doers, the other makes them ridiculous. George Eliot seeks to present a fully developed background, and is at pains to make her characters

talk with absolute realism; Meredith concentrates attention upon his typical characters, and cares little whether his men and women talk naturally so long as they embody the essential, spiritual truth of humanity. His dialogue is more highly compressed, more heavily loaded with meaning, than it could be in actual life. The same pursuit of the essential makes him abrupt in structure; he shifts the scene suddenly, he drops the thread of his story and picks it up again where he wills, in such a manner as to render it difficult for any but a practised reader to follow him. Like Browning, instead of presenting his tale in plain, clear narrative, he prefers to give it to us in flashes and half-lights, as it is seen from different points of view. He skirmishes round his story, seeming to miss a hundred strong situations for which the reader actually hungers. But this is the strategy of novel-writing. After pages of skirmishing he at last brings his characters to battle in just that relation in which every force is available. Thus in vital moments Meredith's novels fulfil the reader's demand for significant action. By the freighted meaning of his action and dialogue Meredith does for his readers, more than any other novelist, what the artist should do, he gives a heightened sense of realities. He does not reproduce life; he does not decorate it; he does not idealize it; but he exemplifies it in types and situations of unusual meaning and power.

Meredith's artistic formula is in sharp contrast to the practice of the other great living English novelist. Thomas Hardy's career has, like Meredith's, been a long one. He published *Desperate Remedies* in 1868, and *A Pair of Blue Eyes* in 1873. *The Return of the Native*, *The Woodlanders*, and *Far from the Madding Crowd*, his three masterpieces, followed. His popular reputation began, however, with *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891). In Meredith's view of life, man is all important. The works of man, his society, his conventions, his expression of him-

Thomas Hardy.

self, are the great facts of the world. Man is indeed held down and sacrificed, by his own perverseness and by that of his fellows; but he can rise against this human perverseness, attack it, and overthrow it, or die valiantly in the attempt. The struggle of humanity is one of man with men, and is always capable of yielding glorious victory. This hope gives brightness to all of Meredith's books, even to the most tragic. In Hardy's world, on the other hand, man is of the smallest importance; the study of man's intellect and of his works will never bring us nearer to the secret of the universe, to the essential reason or unreason of things. A man is not held, thwarted, and insulted by his fellows only; his warfare is not chiefly with them; the perversity of his lot is not chiefly of their making. It is rather of the very nature of the world into which he is born, a world full of the irony of circumstance. It is true, human beings are often the vehicles of that irony, but we cannot say that Hardy's heroes are conquered by human opponents. They fall before they can come to close quarters with the enemy. Jude the Obscure, checked in his ambition for scholarship, cannot get at the man behind the system which damns him. He can only write bitter words on the outside wall of the college which refuses him admittance. Thus Hardy's world is without the element of healthful, hopeful combat. Life is tragic by hypothesis; the irony of circumstance is a recognizable element in the metaphysical constitution of the world. Often the operations of this time-spirit are humorous, with a grim contemptuous humor that is as bitter as its malice: but in Hardy's later works the tragedy is not lightened even by this devilish play. At the end of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles,* he does indeed call the work of "Time the arch-satirist" with Tess a joke, but we cannot help feeling that the arch-satirist has been all along in bitter earnest.

Contrast with Meredith.

In contrast with the insignificance of man, Hardy presents the eternal reality of nature. With him the scene is

an element of first importance, essential in the development of the story. Sometimes he treats it, especially in his early work, in a poetic and idyllic fashion, as an escape from the tragedy of life—the pastoral escape. But more often he uses it with symbolical meaning, as when he makes the warped, misshapen, stunted trees in *The Woodlanders* suggest "the unfulfilled intention" in human life; or he represents it as the embodiment of the power not ourselves which works man's humiliation. It is noteworthy that in his human types he chooses those which are closest to nature, those in which the primitive impulses are strongest, in which action is the natural mode of expression. Meredith draws his characters from the walks of life where men and women are most complex, where thought is most active. In Hardy's view, thought is as futile toward truth as was the Tower of Babel to scale the heavens. Meredith, in his belief in the significant, is continually heightening the individual, pushing his characters beyond human limits. Hardy holds that nothing in man is significant except race, sex, and the great servitude to time and nature; and hence he chooses types which will present these realities most clearly.

It must not be thought that Hardy's novels were written to present a system of fatalistic philosophy, nor need their atmosphere be taken, necessarily, as an expression of personal temperament. It is true, however, that their increasingly gloomy tone appealed to a mood of the later nineteenth century, a mood of weariness and reaction from moral strenuousness, of disinterest in questions of conscience. Such a mood always finds indirect expression in some form of romantic escape from the realities of life, and of this neo-romanticism Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894) is the brightest exponent. Stevenson gained his first fame with *Treasure Island* (1883), a fascinating tale of piracy and search for gold, without the remotest suggestion of a moral meaning.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

There followed *Kidnapped* (1886), *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889), and *David Balfour* (1893), all stories of adventure in the past. He wrote also many short stories, some with an historical setting, some (as *The New Arabian Nights*) with a charmingly fantastic arrangement of modern conditions for a background. His last years he spent in Samoa, and the South Seas gave him material for a new series of short stories, and for *The Ebb Tide* (1893).

Stevenson has presented in several essays his artistic theory, according to which incident is to be regarded as the highest mood of fiction. But his practice in his later works shows that he did not satisfy himself with merely inventing surprising adventures and imagining remote conditions. With him human nature and human issues are at the centre of the developing web of event; and from the most romantic background human character disengages itself in strong clear forms. Alan Breck on the Scottish moors, in *Kidnapped*, and Wiltshire, in *The Beach of Falesà*, are both incontrovertibly actual.

Stevenson's Art.

Stevenson's romanticism shows itself most interestingly in a spirit of artistic enterprise and adventure. His novels and tales are more various and daring in their method and technique than those of any of his predecessors; and on the whole his artistic experiments justify themselves. In firmness and clearness of structure, in novelty and variety of method, methods of description and narrative, and in surface brilliancy of style, he marks the extraordinary technical advance which the novel has made since the days of Scott.

For another reason, also, Stevenson's name may fittingly stand at the end of a chapter on the English novel. He represents in a sense the return of the century upon itself. The nineteenth century opened with an extraordinary development of romanticism, under Scott. That romanticism became mingled with realistic elements in Bulwer and

Dickens, and finally gave way entirely before the realism of Thackeray and George Eliot. This change corresponded to a development which went on all over Europe,—a change evident in French literature in the work of Flaubert, Zola, and Maupassant; in Russian literature in that of Tolstoi and Turgenief. It is to be considered, however, that the English realists have never been so thorough-going as their contemporaries on the Continent. The absolute realistic formula, the picturing of life for its own sake, was relieved in Thackeray by the play of temperament, in George Eliot by moral purpose, in George Meredith by an artistic ideal, and in Hardy by a fascinating though sinister philosophy. At length in Stevenson the romantic spirit is come again; and though this romanticism is no longer unconscious as in Scott, or a literary trick as in Bulwer, or merely temperamental as in Miss Brontë, but is infused with artistic and ethical seriousness, still the fact remains that, in his largest aspect, Stevenson represents the impulse of escape from the here and now into the world of play.

Summary.

READING GUIDE

THE following is intended as a working bibliography, to serve as guide to a first-hand acquaintance with the authors treated in this book, and to some of the biographical and critical literature concerning them. Cheap and accessible editions and short biographies are given preference. Authors are mentioned in the order in which they occur in the body of the book, and the chapter-divisions are followed, except that the two chapters on the novel are thrown together.

Of the critical matter here indicated, the young student is of course not expected to make much use; but it will enable him to extend his knowledge of any given author or period when desired, and will serve, it is hoped, as a guide to after-study.

GENERAL WORKS COVERING THE WHOLE PERIOD

Green's Short History of the English People may be used with profit throughout, to connect literary with social and political history. Traill's Social England is valuable for reference, with the same end in view. The Dictionary of National Biography may be consulted for biographical treatment fuller than that given in the text and less extended than that furnished by the separate biographies mentioned below. Taine's History of English Literature, though hardly trustworthy, is stimulating, and valuable if used with caution. Ward's English Poets and Craik's English Prose give extracts covering practically the whole course of English literature, and are especially valuable in the case of minor authors. Ryland's Chronological Outlines of English Literature is extremely useful for reference.

CHAPTER I.: THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD

General Works.—Stopford Brooke's History of Early English Literature (Macmillan). J. J. Jusserand's Literary History of the

English People (Putnam). B. Ten Brink's History of English Literature (Holt).

Translations.—Beowulf: The Deeds of Beowulf, prose translations, by J. Earle (Clarendon Press); by J. L. Hall, Beowulf, in modern English prose (Macmillan); The Tale of Beowulf, by W. Morris and A. J. Wyatt (Longmans); metrical translation by J. M. Garnett (Ginn); rhythmical and alliterative translation by J. L. Hall (Heath). Widsith is partially translated in Brooke's Early English Literature, and completely in The Exeter Book, Ed. I. Gollancz (Kegan Paul). Deor's Lament and The Wanderer are translated in Brooke; the latter also in Gollancz's Exeter Book. The Wife's Complaint and The Lover's Message are analyzed and partially translated in Brooke. Cædmon's Metrical Paraphrase, with translation and text, is edited by Thorp. Cynewulf's Christ is edited, with translation, by I. Gollancz (Nutt). The Christ of Cynewulf, translated into English prose, by C. H. Whitman (Ginn). Translations of the Phœnix and the Andreas are given in Gollancz's Exeter Book. Judith, with text and translation, is edited by A. S. Cook (Heath). Longfellow's Poets and Poetry of Europe contains illustrations of early poetry. A translation of The Battle of Brunanburh, by Lord Tennyson, can be found in his works; a translation of the same is given in J. M. Garnett's Elene, Judith, and other Anglo-Saxon poems (Ginn).

Chapter II.: The Norman-French Period

General Works.—The Story of the Normans, by S. O. Jewett (Stories of the Nations); Jusserand's Literary History of the English People; Ten Brink's History of English Literature (Holt); Courthope's History of English Poetry. For the making of the language, see Jusserand's Literary History, Book III., Chapter I.; Bradley's Making of English (Macmillan); Marsh's Lectures on the English Language; Emerson's History of the English Language.

Texts and Translations.—For the romance literature of the period see Ellis's Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances, Morley's Early English Prose Romances (Carisbrooke Library), Joyce's Old Celtic Romances, Lady Charlotte Guest's Mabinogion, and Sidney Lanier's Boy's Mabinogion (Scribner). Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight, edited by R. Morris, for the Early English Text Society (Trübner), Layamon's Brut, text and translation, edited by Sir F. Madden. Extracts from the Cursor Mundi, and from Richard Rolle of Hampole, may be found in Specimens of Early English, Vol. II., edited by R. Morris and W. W. Skeat (Clarendon Press). The Pearl, text and translation, edited by I. Gollancz (Nutt). The lyrics "Alysoun" and "Lent is come with love to

town" are given in Morris and Skeat's Specimens of Early English, Vol. II. The Love Rune of Thomas de Hales can be found in Ten Brink's History of English Literature, Vol. I. A very interesting and valuable collection of early lyric poetry is Böddeker's Altenglisch Dichtungen, but this is suitable only for advanced students.

Criticism.—Besides the general works mentioned above, see Studies in the Arthurian Legends, J. Rhys (Clarendon Press). An essay on Old English Metrical Romances occurs in J. W. Hales's Folia Litteraria.

Chapter III.: The Age of Chaucer

General Works.—Jusserand's Literary History of the English People, and the same author's English Wayfaring Life in the Fourteenth Century; Ten Brink's History of English Literature; Courthope's History of English Poetry (especially valuable for Langland); Browne's Chaucer's England; Chronicles of Froissart, Lord Berner's translation (16th century) newly edited (Macmillan, 1895). For younger students, the Boy's Froissart, by S. Lanier (Scribner); Stories from Froissart, by H. Newbolt.

Chaucer. *Texts.*—The best complete single-volume edition is the Student's Chaucer, edited by W. W. Skeat (Clarendon Press). Skeat has also edited Chaucer's Complete Works, in 7 vols.; the Minor Poems, in 1 vol.; and various selections from the Canterbury Tales (all from the Clarendon Press). G. L. Kittredge edits Selections from the Canterbury Tales (Ginn).

Biography, Criticism, etc.—A Chaucer Primer, by A. W. Pollard (Macmillan); The Language and Metre of Chaucer, by B. Ten Brink, translated by M. B. Smith (Macmillan); Chaucer's Pronunciation, by G. Hempl (Heath); Life of Chaucer, by A. W. Ward (English Men of Letters); Studies in Chaucer, by T. R. Lounsbury (3 vols.); J. R. Lowell, Chaucer, in My Study Windows; W. Hazlitt, Chaucer and Spenser, in Lectures on the English Poets.

Gower, Langland, etc. *Texts.*—Gower, English Works, edited by G. C. Macaulay (Kegan Paul). Wyclif, Select English Works, edited by T. Arnold (Clarendon Press). Langland, The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Plowman, edited by W. W. Skeat (gives 3 texts). Skeat has also edited a small edition of Piers Plowman, giving the first seven cantos (Clarendon Press). Piers the Plowman, done into modern prose, by K. M. Warren (London, 1899). The King's Quair, edited by W. W. Skeat (Blackwood). The Travels of Sir John Mandeville, in modern spelling (Macmillan's Library of English Classics). Le Morte Darthur, edited by I. Gollancz (Temple Classics). Malory's History of King Arthur

and the Quest of the Holy Grail, selected portions, edited by E. Rhys (Camelot Series). The Boy's King Arthur, with introductory essay, by S. Lanier (Scribner). Morris and Skeat's Specimens of Early English, Vol. II., contains extracts from Langland, Gower's Confessio Amantis, Wyclif's Bible, and Mandeville's Travels.

Biography and Criticism.—J. J. Jusserand, Piers Plowman, a contribution to the history of English mysticism. Confessio Amantis, in J. W. Hales's Folia Litteraria. C. W. Le Bas, Life of John Wyclif (Harper). L. Sergeant, Wyclif (Heroes of the Nations Series). J. J. Jusserand, The Romance of a King's Life (i.e., King James I. of Scotland) contains an appreciative study of the King's Quair and extracts from it.

Chapter IV.: The Renaissance

General Works.—F. Seebohm, The Era of the Protestant Revolution (Scribner); L. F. Field, An Introduction to the Study of the Renaissance (Scribner); The Italian Renaissance in England, by L. Einstein (Macmillan); A. Pearson, A Short History of the Renaissance in Italy, taken from the work of J. A. Symonds (Smith Elder); B. O. Flower, The Century of Sir Thomas More (Arena Publishing Co.); Wm. Hazlitt, Lectures on the Literature of the Age of Elizabeth (Bell and Daldy, 1871); G. E. Saintsbury, Elizabethan Literature (Macmillan); E. P. Whipple, The Literature of the Age of Elizabeth (Houghton Mifflin); W. Pater, The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry (Macmillan); J. Burckhardt, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy, translated by S. G. C. Middlemore (London, 1898).

Sir Thomas More.—Utopia, with other ideal commonwealths (Morley's Universal Library). Utopia and History of Edward V., with Roper's Life of More, in Camelot Series and Temple Classics. Utopia, in Pitt Press Series. For lives of Colet, Erasmus, and More, see The Oxford Reformers, by F. Seebohm (Longmans).

Roger Ascham.—Toxophilus and The Schoolmaster, in Arber's English Reprints (Macmillan).

Hugh Latimer.—"Sermon on the Ploughers," in Arber's English Reprints; Selections in Cassell's National Library.

Wyatt and Surrey.—Poems, in Tottel's Miscellany, Arber's English Reprints; Poems, Aldine edition; The Surrey and Wyatt Anthology, ed. E. Arber (Frowde). Sir Thomas Wyatt and His Poems, by W. E. Simonds (Heath). Essay on Wyatt and Surrey, in J. W. Hales's Folia Litteraria.

Thomas Sackville.—Induction, and Complaint of Buckingham, in Mirror for Magistrates, Library of Old Authors (Scribner); Gorboduc,

in Specimens of Preshakespearean Drama, edited by J. M. Manly (Ginn).

JOHN LYLY.—Euphues, in Arber's English Reprints. Plays, in Library of Old Authors; Endymion, edited, with essay, by G. P. Baker (Holt); Campaspe, in Manly's Specimens of Preshakespearean Drama (Ginn).

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY. *Texts.*—Arcadia (reproduction of old edition), edited by H. O. Sommers (Kegan Paul); Defense of Poesy, ed. A. S. Cook (Ginn), also in Pitt Press Series and Arber's English Reprints; Astrophel and Stella, ed. A. Pollard (Stott); Selections, prose, ed. G. MacDonald, in the Elizabethan Library (McClurg); Selections, poetry, ed. A. B. Grosart, in the Elizabethan Library (Stock).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, in Vol. IV. of A. B. Grosart's edition of the Works of Lord Brooke (Fuller's Worthies Library); Life, by J. A. Symonds (English Men of Letters); Life, by H. R. Fox Bourne (Heroes of the Nations); Some Sonnets of Sir Philip Sidney, in Charles Lamb's Essays of Elia.

STEPHEN GOSSON.—The School of Abuse, in Arber's English Reprints.

ROBERT GREENE.—Works, ed. A. B. Grosart (Huth Library); Dramatic Works and Poems, ed. A. Dyce (Pickering); Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, ed. A. Ward (Oxford, 1892); Menaphon, ed. E. Arber (London, 1880); Groatsworth of Wit, in Elizabethan and Jacobean Pamphlets, ed. G. E. Saintsbury; Poems of Greene, Marlowe, and Ben Jonson, 1 vol., ed. G. Bell (Bell).

THOMAS NASH.—Works, ed. A. B. Grosart (Huth Library); The Unfortunate Traveller, edited, with essay on life and writings of Nash, by E. Gosse (Chiswick Press); Other Papers by Nash in Saintsbury's Elizabethan and Jacobean Pamphlets.

THOMAS LODGE.—Works, ed. E. Gosse, for the Hunterian Club (Glasgow, 1883); Sonnets, in Elizabethan Sonnet-Cycles (McClurg).

GEORGE PEELE.—Works, ed. A. H. Bullen (Nimmo); Poems and Plays, in Morley's Universal Library.

RICHARD HOOKER. *Texts.*—Works, ed. J. Keble (Oxford University Press, 1836); The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, Books 1–4, in Morley's Universal Library.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by Isaac Walton (with lives of Donne, Wotton, and Herbert) in Morley's Universal Library; Essay, by E. Dowden, in Puritan and Anglican.

EDMUND SPENSER. *Texts.*—Works, Globe edition, with memoir by J. W. Hales (Macmillan); Works, Aldine edition; Minor Poems, in Temple Classics (Macmillan); Selected Poems, with introduc-

tion by R. Noel, in Canterbury Poets Series; Spenser Anthology, ed. E. Arber (Frowde).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by R. W. Church (English Men of Letters); An Outline Guide to the Study of Spenser, by F. I. Carpenter (University of Chicago, 1894); Essay, by J. R. Lowell, in Among my Books, and by E. Dowden, in Transcripts and Studies; Chaucer and Spenser, in W. Hazlitt's Lectures on the English Poets. See also W. S. Landor's Imaginary Conversations, Essex and Spenser and Elizabeth and Cecil.

GABRIEL HARVEY.—Works, ed. A. B. Grosart (Huth Library).

GEORGE CHAPMAN. *Texts.*—Poems, Plays, and Translations, ed. R. H. Shepherd, with study of Chapman by A. C. Swinburne (London, 1874); Plays, in Mermaid Series; Translation of Iliad, in Morley's Universal Library.

Biography and Criticism.—Chapman, a Critical Study, by A. C. Swinburne (Chatto and Windus); Essay, by J. R. Lowell, in The Old English Dramatists, and in Conversations on Some of the Old Poets.

MICHAEL DRAYTON.—Idea's Mirror, in Arber's English Garner; Sonnets, in Elizabethan Sonnet Cycles.

SAMUEL DANIEL.—Sonnets, in Elizabethan Sonnet-Cycles; Defense of Rhyme, in Ancient Critical Essays, ed. Haslewood.

FULKE GREVILLE, LORD BROOKE.—Works, ed. A. B. Grosart; Selections, ed. A. B. Grosart, in the Elizabethan Library (McClurg); Life of Sidney, in Vol. IV. of Grosart's edition of Lord Brooke's Works; Sonnets, in Elizabethan Sonnet-Cycles.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE.—Poems of Greene, Marlowe, and Ben Jonson, ed. R. Bell (Bell). For Marlowe's plays, and critical works upon him, see next division.

THOMAS CAMPION.—Book of Airs, in Arber's English Garner; Poems (Dent).

Other collections of Elizabethan Lyrics are: Lyrics from the Dramatists of the Elizabethan Age, ed. A. H. Bullen (Lawrence and Bullen); Poems, chiefly lyrical, from Elizabethan Romances, etc., ed. A. H. Bullen (Nimmo); English Madrigals in the Time of Shakespeare, ed. F. A. Cox (Dent); A Book of Elizabethan Lyrics, ed. F. E. Schelling (Athenæum Press Series); Elizabethan Songs, ed. E. H. Garrett, with introduction by A. Lang (Osgood, McIlvaine).

SIR WALTER RALEIGH. *Texts.*—Works (Oxford University Press); Selections, ed. A. B. Grosart, in the Elizabethan Library (Stock); Poems, in Courtly Poets, ed. Hannah, Aldine edition; The Fight of the Revenge, in Arber's English Reprints.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by E. Gosse (English Wor-

thies); Life, by E. Edwards (Macmillan); Essay, by Charles Kingsley, in Plays and Puritans and Other Essays (Macmillan, 1889).

Chapter V.: The Drama before Shakespeare

Texts.—The principal texts necessary for a study of this period of the drama, up to Marlowe, will be found in Specimens of Preshakespearean Drama, 2 vols., ed. J. M. Manly (Ginn); the third volume of this work, soon to be published, will contain a history of the drama before Shakespeare. English Miracle Plays, Moralities, and Interludes, by A. W. Pollard, contains some pieces not given in Manly's Specimens, and an interesting essay on the origin of the drama. For plays of Lyly, Greene, and Peele, see preceding section. Marlowe's complete works are edited by A. H. Bullen (Nimmo); his chief plays are in the Mermaid Series (Scribner), ed. H. Ellis; Dr. Faustus is edited by W. Wagner (Longmans), and by A. W. Ward; Edward the Second is edited by A. W. Verity (Dent).

History and Criticism.—A History of English Dramatic Literature to the Death of Queen Anne, by A. W. Ward, new edition, 1899; Shakespeare's Predecessors, by J. A. Symonds; Shakespeare and His Predecessors, by F. S. Boas (Scribner); The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy, by J. W. Cunliffe (Macmillan); The English Religious Drama, by K. L. Bates. W. Hazlitt's Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth gives a good general view of the causes leading up to the outburst of poetry in the later years of Elizabeth's reign. See also chapters on the early drama in Ten Brink's History of English Literature and in Jusserand's Literary History of the English People. Also essay on the Predecessors of Shakespeare, in the Essays and Studies of J. C. Collins. For Marlowe, see essays by E. Dowden, in Transcripts and Studies, and by H. Kingsley, in Fireside Studies, and by J. R. Lowell, in The Old English Dramatists. For the history of the stage, see A Chronicle History of the London Stage, 1559-1642, by F. G. Fleay.

Chapter VI.: Shakespeare*

Biography and Criticism. Extended Works.—Life of William Shakespeare, by S. Lee (Macmillan); Shakespeare, a critical study of his mind and art, by E. Dowden (Harper); William Shakespeare, a critical study, by G. Brandes (Macmillan); Shakespeare, his life, art, and characters, with an historical sketch of the origin and growth of the drama in England, by H. N. Hudson (Ginn);

* As available and sufficiently trustworthy editions of Shakespeare are very numerous, no texts are given.

Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist, by R. G. Moulton (Clarendon Press); A Chronicle History of the Life and Work of Shakespeare, by F. G. Fleay (Nimmo); William Shakspere, a study in Elizabethan Literature, by B. Wendell (Scribner); William Shakespeare, Poet, Dramatist, and Man, by H. W. Mabie (Macmillan); Shakespeare the Man, by Goldwin Smith (Doubleday, Page).

Essays and Studies.—Introduction to Shakespeare, by E. Dowden (Blackie); Shakespeare Primer, by E. Dowden; Shakespearean Primer, by I. Gollancz (Macmillan); Seven Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton, by S. T. Coleridge; Five Lectures on Shakespeare, by B. Ten Brink (Holt); Studies in Shakespeare, by R. G. White (Houghton, Mifflin); Notes and Essays on Shakespeare, J. W. Hales; Characters of Shakespeare's Plays, by W. Hazlitt (Bohn's Standard Library); Shakespeare's Female Characters, also entitled Characteristics of Women, by Mrs. Jameson; Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, in W. Hazlitt's Lectures on the English Comic Writers; Shakespeare and Milton, in W. Hazlitt's Lectures on the English Poets; On Shakespeare's tragedies, and their fitness for stage presentation, in Charles Lamb's Essays of Elia; Shakespeare, or the Poet, in R. W. Emerson's Representative Men; Shakespeare Once More, in J. R. Lowell's Among my Books; Shakespeare's Kings, in R. L. Stevenson's Familiar Studies of Men and Books; Shakespeare the Man, in W. Bagehot's Literary Studies.

Miscellaneous.—Shakespeare's Versification, by G. H. Browne (Ginn); Shakespeare's London, by J. F. Ordish (Dent); Shakespeare's England, by G. W. Thornbury (Longmans); A Chronicle History of the London Stage, 1559–1642, by F. G. Fleay; Shakespeare's Holinshed, a comparison of the chronicle and the history plays, by W. G. B. Stone (Longmans); The English Chronicle Play, by F. E. Schelling (Macmillan); The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines, by Mary Cowden Clark (Armstrong, 1887); Tales from Shakespeare, by Charles and Mary Lamb (Riverside Library); Citation and Examination of William Shakespeare, by W. S. Landor; The Italy of the Elizabethan Dramatists, in Violet Paget's Euphorion.

For language, see Abbott's Shakespearean Grammar, and Schmidt's Shakespeare Lexicon (Leipsig).

Chapter VII.: Shakespeare's Contemporaries and Successors in the Drama

Texts.—All the texts necessary for the study of this period are included in the Mermaid Series of works of the old dramatists (Scribner). Ben Jonson's Alchemist, Volpone, Silent Woman, Sad Shepherd,

and Poems, are given in Morley's Universal Library. Several of Jonson's Masques, with others, and an essay on the Masque, in H. A. Evans's English Masques; Jonson's Timber, ed. F. E. Schelling (Ginn).

Biography and Criticism.—A Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama, 1559–1642, by F. G. Fleay (Reeves and Turner); Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, in W. Hazlitt's Lectures on the English Comic Writers; Life of Ben Jonson, by J. A. Symonds; A Study of Ben Jonson, by A. C. Swinburne; John Webster, in E. Gosse's Seventeenth Century Studies, and in A. C. Swinburne's Studies in Prose and Poetry; Beaumont and Fletcher, in Swinburne's Essays in Prose and Poetry; John Ford, in Lowell's Conversations on Some of the Old Poets, and in Swinburne's Essays and Studies; Massinger, in A. Symons's Studies in Two Literatures. E. Gosse's Jacobean Poets treats Jonson, Chapman, Beaumont and Fletcher, Heywood, Middleton, Webster, and Massinger. J. R. Lowell's Old English Dramatists treats (besides Marlowe) Webster, Chapman, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, and Ford.

Chapter VIII.: Seventeenth Century Non-dramatic Literature before the Restoration

General Works.—S. R. Gardiner's History of England, 1603–1660. G. E. Saintsbury's Elizabethan Literature. English Lyric Poetry, 1500–1700, Selections, with essay, by F. I. Carpenter (Scribner).

Francis Bacon. *Texts.*—Essays in Morley's Universal Library; Advancement of Learning, ed. Wright (Clarendon Press Series); both Essays and Advancement of Learning in Macmillan's Library of English Classics; Selections, ed. A. B. Grosart, in The Elizabethan Library (Stock).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by R. W. Church (English Men of Letters); Life and Philosophy, by J. Nichols; Essay by T. B. Macaulay; Bacon, compared as to style with Sir Thomas Browne and Jeremy Taylor, in W. Hazlitt's Lectures on the Literature of the Age of Elizabeth.

John Donne. *Texts.*—Poems, in Muses' Library, ed. E. K. Chambers, with introduction by G. E. Saintsbury.

Biography and Criticism.—Life and Letters, by E. Gosse (Dodd, Mead); John Donne, sometimes Dean of St. Paul's, by A. Jessopp (Houghton, Mifflin); Life, in Walton's Lives, Morley's Universal Library. Essay in E. Dowden's New Studies, and in E. Gosse's Jacobean Poets.

JEREMY TAYLOR.—Holy Living and Dying, in Bohn's Standard Library. Selections, ed. E. E. Wentworth (Ginn). Life of Jeremy Taylor, with a critical examination of his writings, by R. Heber; Essay by E. Dowden, in Puritan and Anglican. See also W. Hazlitt's Literature of the Age of Elizabeth.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE. *Texts.*—Hydriotaphia (Urn-Burial) and Garden of Cyrus, in Golden Treasury Series; Religio Medici and Urn-Burial, with introduction by J. A. Symonds, in Camelot Series; Religio Medici and other Essays, ed. D. L. Roberts (Stott Library); Works, 3 vols., in Bohn's Library.

Criticism.—Essays, by L. Stephen, in Hours in a Library; by E. Dowden, in Puritan and Anglican; by W. Pater, in Appreciations; by J. Texte, in Etudes de la Littérature Européenne (Paris, 1898). See also W. Hazlitt's Literature of the Age of Elizabeth.

THE CAVALIER POETS.—Carew, in Muses' Library; Lovelace, Suckling, ed. W. C. Hazlitt, in Library of Old Authors. For selections, see Cavalier and Courtier Lyrists, an anthology of minor seventeenth century verse, in Canterbury Poets Series (Scott); English Lyric Poetry, 1500–1700, Selections, with essay, by F. I. Carpenter (Scribner). See also Ward's English Poets.

WILLIAM BROWNE.—Poetical Works, with introduction by A. H. Bullen, in the Muses' Library. See Gosse's Jacobean Poets.

GEORGE WITHER.—Poems, with introduction by H. Morley, in Companion Poet Series (Routledge). Essay on the poetry of Wither, in C. Lamb's Miscellaneous Essays. See also Gosse's Jacobean Poets.

ISAAK WALTON.—Complete Angler, with introduction by A. Lang (Dent); Complete Angler, in Cassell's National Library; Walton's Lives (of Donne, Herbert, etc.), in Morley's Universal Library. Essay by J. R. Lowell, in Latest Literary Essays.

ROBERT HERRICK.—Hesperides and Noble Numbers, ed. A. Pollard, with introduction by A. C. Swinburne (Lawrence and Bullen); Hesperides, ed. E. Rhys, in Canterbury Poets; Selections, in Golden Treasury Series, and Athenæum Press Series. Essays, by E. Gosse, in Seventeenth Century Studies, and A. C. Swinburne, in Studies in Prose and Poetry.

GILES FLETCHER.—Complete Poems, ed. A. B. Grosart, Fuller's Worthies Library. See Gosse's Jacobean Poets.

GEORGE HERBERT.—The Temple, in Morley's Universal Library, and in the Temple Classics; Poems, with selections from his prose, and Walton's Life of Herbert, ed. E. Rhys, in Canterbury Poets Series. Essay, by E. Dowden, in Puritan and Anglican.

HENRY VAUGHAN.—Poetical Works, ed. H. C. Beeching, in Muses' Library; Sacred Poems, ed. H. F. Lyte, in Aldine edition.

Essays, by E. Dowden, in Puritan and Anglican; by L. I. Guiney, in A Little English Gallery.

RICHARD CRASHAW.—Works, ed. A. B. Grosart, Fuller's Worthies Library; Works, ed. Turnbull, Library of Old Authors. Essay, by E. Gosse, in Seventeenth Century Studies.

ANDREW MARVELL.—Poems, ed. G. A. Aitken, Muses' Library. Essays, by H. Rogers, in Essays Biographical and Critical; by A. C. Benson, in his Essays.

ABRAHAM COWLEY.—Complete works, with introduction by A. B. Grosart, Chertsey Worthies Library; Cowley's Essays, ed. Hurd (London, 1868). Essay in Gosse's Seventeenth Century Studies, and in W. Stebbing's Some Verdicts of History Reversed.

JOHN MILTON. *Texts.*—Poetical Works, ed. Masson, Globe edition; Poetical Works, with a translation of the Latin poems, ed. Moody, Cambridge edition (Houghton, Mifflin); Prose Writings, ed. Morley, Carisbrooke Library; Prose Writings, Bohn's Standard Library.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by M. Pattison (English Men of Letters); Life, by W. Raleigh (Putnam); Life, by R. Garnett (Great Writers Series); Life, by Dr. Johnson, in Lives of the Poets; the most available edition is Six Chief Lives from Johnson's Lives of the Poets, ed. M. Arnold (Macmillan); Life and Times, 7 vols., by D. Masson. Essays, by J. R. Lowell, in Among My Books and in Latest Literary Essays; by M. Arnold, in Essays in Criticism; by E. Dowden, in Puritan and Anglican and in Transcripts and Studies; by W. Bagehot, in Literary Studies. Addison's Criticism on Paradise Lost, ed. A. S. Cook (Ginn).

JOHN BUNYAN. *Texts.*—Grace Abounding, in Cassell's National Library; Pilgrim's Progress, in Golden Treasury Series and Riverside Literature Series.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by J. A. Froude (English Men of Letters). Essays, by T. B. Macaulay; by G. E. Woodberry, in Makers of Literature; by E. Dowden, in Puritan and Anglican; by Tulloch, in English Puritanism and its Leaders.

CHAPTER IX.: THE RESTORATION

General Works.—Macaulay's History of England; The Age of Dryden, by R. Garnett (Bell); Le Publique et les Hommes de Lettres en Angleterre, 1660-1744, Beljame; From Shakespeare to Pope, by E. Gosse, treats of the rise of the classical school; Ben Jonson and the Classical School, by F. E. Schelling (reprinted from Vol. 13 of Modern Language Association Publications, Baltimore, 1898).

JOHN DRYDEN. *Texts.*—Poetical Works, ed. W. D. Christie, Globe

edition; Select Poems, ed. W. D. Christie (Clarendon Press); The Dryden Anthology, ed. E. Arber (Frowde); Essays, selected and edited by W. P. Ker (Clarendon Press); Translation of Æneid, in Morley's Universal Library.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by G. E. Saintsbury (English Men of Letters); Life, by Dr. Johnson (for edition see under Milton). Essays, by J. R. Lowell, in Among My Books; by J. C. Collins, in Essays and Studies; by D. Masson, in The Three Devils and Other Essays; by W. Hazlitt, in Lectures on the English Poets.

Samuel Butler.—Hudibras, in Morley's Universal Library. Essay, by E. Dowden, in Puritan and Anglican.

Samuel Pepys.—Diary, with selections from his correspondence, ed. Lord Braybrooke, in Chandos Library (Warne). Samuel Pepys and the World he Lived in, by H. B. Wheatley (Scribner); Essay, by R. L. Stevenson, in Familiar Studies of Men and Books (Scribner).

Sir William Davenant.—See E. Gosse's From Shakespeare to Pope.

Thomas Otway.—Plays, ed. R. Noel (Mermaid Series). Étude sur Thomas Otway, par A. de Grisy (Paris, 1868).

William Wycherley.—Plays, ed. W. C. Ward (Mermaid Series). See Wycherley, Congreve, etc., in W. Hazlitt's Lectures on the English Comic Writers.

William Congreve.—Plays, ed. A. C. Ewald (Mermaid Series). Life, by E. Gosse (Great Writers); Congreve and Addison, in W. M. Thackeray's English Humorists. See also under Wycherley. For Wycherley, Congreve, and the Eighteenth Century comedy, see C. Lamb's essay On the Artificial Comedy of the Last Century, and G. Meredith's Essay on Comedy and the Comic Spirit (Scribner).

Chapter X.: The Eighteenth Century: The Reign of Classicism

General Works.—History of England in the Eighteenth Century, by W. E. H. Lecky; English Thought in the Eighteenth Century, by L. Stephen; History of English Literature in the Eighteenth Century, by T. S. Perry; Eighteenth Century Literature, by E. Gosse; The Age of Pope, by J. Dennis; The Age of Johnson, by T. Seccombe (Macmillan); Le Publique et les Hommes de Lettres en Angleterre, 1660–1744. For the early history of Journalism, see H. R. Fox Bourne's English Newspapers, chapters 1–5 (Chatto and Windus, 1887).

Jonathan Swift. *Texts.*—Works, ed. T. Scott (Bell); Selections, ed. C. T. Winchester (Ginn); Selections, ed. H. Craik (Clarendon

Press); Selections, in Carisbrooke Library; Journal to Stella, ed. G. A. Aitken (Putnam); Selected Letters, in Eighteenth Century Letters and Letter-Writers, ed. R. B. Johnson.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by J. C. Collins (Chatto and Windus); Life, by H. Craik (Murray); Life, by L. Stephen (English Men of Letters); Life, by Dr. Johnson (for edition see under Milton). Essays, by W. M. Thackeray, in English Humorists; by D. Masson, in the Three Devils and Other Essays; by A. Dobson, in Eighteenth Century Vignettes.

JOSEPH ADDISON. *Texts.*—Works, ed. H. G. Bohn (Bohn's British Classics); Selections in Athenæum Press Series, Golden Treasury Series, Camelot Series, Chandos Classics, etc.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by W. J. Courthope (English Men of Letters); Life, by Dr. Johnson (for edition see under Milton). Essays, by T. B. Macaulay (numerous school editions); by E. Gosse, in Among My Books; Congreve and Addison, in W. M. Thackeray's English Humorists.

SIR RICHARD STEELE. *Texts.*—Selected Essays from the Spectator, ed. J. Habberton (Putnam); Selected Essays from the Tatler and Guardian, together with Macaulay's lives of Steele and Addison (Bangs); Selections, ed. G. R. Carpenter (Athenæum Press Series); The Lover, and other papers by Steele and Addison, in Camelot Series; Steele's Plays, ed. G. A. Aitken (Mermaid Series).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by G. A. Aitken (London, 1889); Life, by A. Dobson (English Worthies). See Thackeray's English Humorists, and "Steele's Letters," in A. Dobson's Eighteenth Century Vignettes.

LORD CHESTERFIELD.—Letters to his Son, ed. C. Strachey (Putnam), also in Camelot Series, and in Eighteenth Century Letters, Vol. II., ed. R. B. Johnson (New York, 1898). Essay, by J. C. Collins, in Essays and Studies, and by Sainte-Beuve in English Portraits (Holt).

ALEXANDER POPE. *Texts.*—Poetical Works, ed. A. W. Ward, Globe edition; Essay on Man, ed. M. Pattison (Clarendon Press); Satires and Epistles, ed. M. Pattison (Clarendon Press); Pope's Iliad, Books 1, 6, 22-24 (numerous school editions); Selections from Poetical Works, in Canterbury Poets Series; Letters, in English Letters and Letter-Writers of the Eighteenth Century, ed. H. Williams (Bell).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by L. Stephen (English Men of Letters); Life, by Dr. Johnson (for edition see under Milton). Essays, by L. Stephen, in Hours in a Library; by Sainte-Beuve, in English Portraits; by J. R. Lowell, in My Study Windows; by T.

De Quincey, in Biographical Essays, and also in his Essays on the Poets; by W. S. Lilly, in Essays and Speeches. See also W. M. Thackeray's English Humorists; W. Hazlitt's Lectures on the Poets; and J. Warton's Genius and Writings of Pope

SAMUEL JOHNSON. *Texts.*—Essays, selected and edited by G. B. Hill (Dent); Essays, selected, in Camelot Series; Rasselas, ed. G. B. Hill (Clarendon Press); Rasselas, ed. H. Morley, in Morley's Universal Library; Letters, ed. G. B. Hill (Clarendon Press); Letters, selected, in Eighteenth Century Letters, ed. R. B. Johnson (New York, 1898); Six Chief Lives from Johnson's Lives of the Poets, with Macaulay's Life of Johnson, ed. M. Arnold (Macmillan).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by L. Stephen (English Men of Letters); Boswell's Life of Johnson, ed. M. Morris, in Library of English Classics (Macmillan). Dr. Johnson, his Friends and Critics, by G. B. Hill (Smith Elder); Essay, by L. Stephen, in Hours in a Library, and by T. B. Macaulay (not to be confused with Macaulay's Life of Johnson, above).

OLIVER GOLDSMITH. *Texts.*—Poems, Plays, and Essays, ed. J. Aikin and H. T. Tuckerman (Crowell); Miscellaneous Works, ed. D. Masson, Globe edition; Vicar of Wakefield, Poems, and Plays, in Morley's Universal Library; The Goldsmith Anthology, ed. E. Arber (Frowde).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by W. Black (English Men of Letters); Life, by A. Dobson (Great Writers); Life, by J Forster. Essays, by A. Dobson, in his Miscellanies, by T De Quincey, in Essays on the Poets; by T. B. Macaulay. See also Thackeray's English Humorists.

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN.—Plays, ed. R. Dircks, in Camelot Series; Plays, in Morley's Universal Library, and in Macmillan's Library of English Classics. Life, by L. C. Sanders (Great Writers), and by M. O. W. Oliphant (English Men of Letters).

EDWARD GIBBON. *Texts.*—Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ed. J. B. Bury (Methuen); Student's Gibbon, abridged (Murray); Memoirs, with essay by W. D. Howells (Osgood); Memoirs, ed. G. B. Hill (Methuen); Memoirs, in Carisbrooke Library and in Athenæum Press Series.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by J. C. Morison (English Men of Letters). Essays, by W. Bagehot, in Literary Studies; by F. Harrison, in Ruskin, Mill and other literary estimates; by C. A. Sainte-Beuve, in English Portraits.

EDMUND BURKE. *Texts.*—Select Works, ed. E. J. Payne (Clarendon Press Series); Selections, ed. B Perry (Holt); American Speeches and Letters on the Irish Question, in Morley's Universal Library.

Essay on the Sublime and the Beautiful, Temple Classics (Macmillan).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by J. Morley (English Men of Letters). See E. Dowden's French Revolution and English Literature.

CHAPTER XI.: THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY NOVEL. (SEE BELOW)

CHAPTER XII.: THE REVIVAL OF ROMANTICISM

General Works.—English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century, by H. A. Beers; The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement, by W. L. Phelps; English Literature in the Eighteenth Century, by T. S. Perry; Eighteenth Century Literature, by E. Gosse; Literary History of England, by Mrs. Oliphant (opening chapters).

JAMES THOMSON. *Texts.*—The Seasons and Castle of Indolence, ed. H. E. Greene (Athenæum Press Series); Works, Aldine edition.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by W. Bayne (Scribner); James Thomson, sa vie et ses œuvres, by Leon Morel (Hachette, Paris). "Thomson and Cowper," in W. Hazlitt's Lectures on the English Poets.

WILLIAM COLLINS.—Works, Aldine edition. Essay in Swinburne's Miscellanies. For further criticism see general works, above.

EDWARD YOUNG.—Works, Aldine edition. See Beers's English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century.

THOMAS GRAY. *Texts.*—Works in Verse and Prose, ed. E. Gosse (Macmillan); Poems, in Routledge's Pocket Library; Poems of Gray, Beattie, and Collins, in Chandos Classics (Warne); Selections from Gray, ed. W. L. Phelps (Athenæum Press).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by E. Gosse (English Men of Letters); Life, by Dr. Johnson (for edition see under Johnson). Essays, by M. Arnold, in Essays in Criticism; by J. R. Lowell, in Latest Literary Essays; by A. Dobson, in Eighteenth Century Vignettes; by L. Stephen, in Hours in a Library. See also The Influence of Old Norse Literature upon English Literature, by C. H. Nordby (Macmillan).

THOMAS PERCY.—Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, in Chandos Classics (Warne); and in Bohn's Standard Library. More recent ballad collections, taken from Percy and other sources, are: The Ballad Book, ed. W. Allingham; Old English Ballads, edited, with valuable preface, by F. B. Gummere (Athenæum Press Series). See, besides general works above, "The Revival of Ballad Poetry in the Eighteenth Century," in J. W. Hales's Folia Litteraria.

JAMES MACPHERSON.—Ossian, in Canterbury Poets. See Beers's English Romanticism, etc.

THOMAS CHATTERTON.—Poetical Works, in Canterbury Poets. Life, by Sir D. Wilson (Macmillan). Essay, by D. Masson, in Essays Biographical and Critical.

GEORGE CRABBE. *Texts.*—Selected Poems, in Cassell's National Library, and in Canterbury Poets; The Borough, in Macmillan's Temple Classics.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by T. E. Kebbel (Great Writers). Essays, by G. E. Woodberry, in Makers of Literature; by L. Stephen, in Hours in a Library; by G. E. Saintsbury, in Essays in English Literature, 1780–1860.

WILLIAM COWPER. *Texts.*—Selected Poems, in Cassell's National Library, in Athenæum Press Series, and in Canterbury Poets; Poetical Works, in Globe edition, in Aldine edition and in Chandos Classics. Letters, ed. W. Benham (Macmillan).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by Goldwin Smith (English Men of Letters); Life, by R. Southey. Essays, by L. Stephen, in Hours in a Library; by W. Bagehot, in Literary Studies; by C. A. Sainte-Beuve, in English Portraits; by A. Dobson, in Eighteenth Century Vignettes; Bunyan, Cowper, and Channing, in G. E. Woodberry's Makers of Literature.

WILLIAM BLAKE. *Texts.*—Poems, with memoir by W. M. Rossetti, Aldine edition; Poems, with specimens of prose writings, in Canterbury Poets; Complete Works, with elaborate critical apparatus and illustrations from Blake's Prophetical Books, ed. E. J. Ellis and W. B. Yeats (London, 1893).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by A. Gilchrist (Macmillan); Life, by A. T. Story (London, 1893); William Blake, a Critical Study, by A. C. Swinburne (Chatto and Windus). Essay, by A. C. Benson, in his Essays.

ROBERT BURNS. *Texts.*—Poetical Works, with introduction by W. E. Henley (Houghton, Mifflin); also in Aldine edition, in Clarendon Press Series, and in Canterbury Poets; Letters, selected, in Camelot Series.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by W. E. Henley (see Cambridge edition, above; also published separately); Life, by J. C. Shairp (English Men of Letters); Life, by G. Setoun (Scribner). Essays, by T. Carlyle (a convenient edition is included in Longman's English Classics); by R. L. Stevenson, in Familiar Studies of Men and Books; by W. H. Thorne, in Modern Idols; by Stopford Brooke, in Theology in the English Poets; by J. Forster, in Great Teachers. Burns and the Old English Ballads, in W. Hazlitt's Lectures on the English Poets.

CHAPTER XIII.: THE TRIUMPH OF ROMANTICISM

General Works.—English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century, by H. A. Beers; Nineteenth Century Literature, by G. E. Saintsbury; The French Revolution and English Literature, by E. Dowden; Studies in Literature, 1789–1877, by E. Dowden; Literary History of England, by Mrs. Oliphant.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE. *Texts.*—Poetical Works, ed. R. Garnett, in Muses Library; Poetical Works, ed. J. D. Campbell (Macmillan); also in Aldine edition, Athenæum Press Series, and Canterbury Poets; Selections from prose writings, ed. C. M. Gayley (Ginn); ed. H. A. Beers (Holt); Lectures on Shakespeare and other English Poets (Bohn's Standard Library).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by H. D. Traill (English Men of Letters). Essays, by J. R. Lowell, in Democracy and Other Addresses; by E. Dowden, in New Studies in Literature; by G. E. Saintsbury, in Essays in English Literature, 1780–1860; by W. Hazlitt, in The Spirit of the Age; by W. Pater, in Appreciations; by G. E. Woodberry, in Makers of Literature; by Stopford Brooke, in Theology in the English Poets; by A. C. Swinburne, in Essays and Studies; by J. Forster, in Great Teachers. See also "My First Acquaintance with Poets," by W. Hazlitt, and notices of Coleridge in the writings of De Quincey.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH. *Texts.*—Poetical Works, with introduction by J. Morley, Globe edition; Selections, with essay by M. Arnold, in Golden Treasury Series; Selections, ed. E. Dowden (Ginn); Selections from prose writings, ed. C. M. Gayley (Ginn); Prefaces and Essays on Poetry, ed. A. J. George (Heath).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by F. W. H. Myers (English Men of Letters); Early Life, a study of the Prelude, by E. Legonis, translated by J. M. Matthews (Dent). A Primer of Wordsworth, by L. Magnus (Methuen); Helps to the Study of Arnold's Wordsworth, by R. Wilson (Macmillan). Essays, by J. R. Lowell, in Among My Books, and in Democracy and Other Addresses; by W. Pater, in Appreciations; by R. H. Hutton, in Literary Essays, and in Essays Theological and Literary; by L. Stephen, in Hours in a Library; Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning, by W. Bagehot, in Literary Studies; by R. W. Church, in Dante and Other Essays; by W. Hazlitt, in The Spirit of the Age.

ROBERT SOUTHEY. *Texts.*—Poetical Works (Crowell); Selections, in Canterbury Poets; Life of Nelson, in Morley's Universal Library, in Temple Classics (Dent), and in English Classics (Longmans).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by E. Dowden (English Men of Letters). Essay, by G. E. Saintsbury, in Studies in English Litera-

ture, 1780–1860, 2d series; by W. Hazlitt, in The Spirit of the Age.

THOMAS CAMPBELL.—Poetical Works, Aldine edition. Life, by J. C. Hadden (Scribner). Essay, by G. E. Saintsbury, in Studies in English Literature, 1780–1860, 2d series.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON. *Texts.*—Selections, with essay by M. Arnold, in Golden Treasury Series; Selections, ed. F. I. Carpenter (Holt); Letters, in Camelot Series.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by J. Nichols (English Men of Letters); Life, by R. Noel (Great Writers). Essays, by M. Arnold, in Essays in Criticism (same as that prefixed to Selections, above); by W. Hazlitt, in The Spirit of the Age; by T. B. Macaulay, in his Essays.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY. *Texts.*—Poetical Works, ed. E. Dowden, Globe edition; Poetical Works, ed. G. E. Woodberry, Cambridge edition; Selections, in Golden Treasury Series and in Heath's English Classics; Essays and Letters, in Camelot Series.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by W. Sharp (Great Writers); Life, by J. A. Symonds (English Men of Letters); Life, by E. Dowden (Kegan Paul). A Shelley Primer, by H. S. Salt (London, 1887). Essays, by G. E. Woodberry, in Makers of Literature; by W. Bagehot, in Literary Studies; by M. Arnold, in Essays in Criticism; by R. H. Hutton, in Literary Essays, and in Essays Theological and Literary; by J. Forster, in Great Teachers.

THOMAS MOORE.—Poetical Works, in Chandos Classics (Warne), and in Canterbury Poets. Life and Works, by A. J. Symington (Harper); Essay, by G. E. Saintsbury, in Essays in English Literature, 1780–1860.

LEIGH HUNT. *Texts.*—Essays, with introduction by A. Symons, in Camelot Series; Dramatic Essays, selected and edited by W. Archer and R. W. Lowe (Scott); Selections from prose and verse, Cavendish Library (Warne); Stories from the Italian Poets, Knickerbocker Nuggets Series (Putnam).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by W. C. Monkhouse (Great Writers). Essays, by T. B. Macaulay, in his Essays, by G. E. Saintsbury, in Essays in English Literature, 1780–1860; by Mrs. Field, in a Shelf of Old Books; Thomas Moore and Leigh Hunt, in W. Hazlitt's Spirit of the Age.

JOHN KEATS. *Texts.*—Poetical Works, with letters, ed. H. E. Scudder, Cambridge edition; Poetical Works, with life by Lord Houghton, Aldine edition; Poems (not quite complete), ed. Palgrave, in Golden Treasury Series; Poems, ed. A. Bates (Athenæum Press Series); Letters, ed. H. B. Forman.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by S. Colvin (English Men of

Letters); Life, by W. M. Rossetti (Great Writers). Essays, by J. R. Lowell, in Among My Books; by M. Arnold, in Essays in Criticism; by A. C. Swinburne, in Miscellanies; by W. H. Hudson, in Studies in Interpretation; by D. Masson, in Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, and Other Essays.

WILLIAM HAZLITT. *Texts.*—Essays, selected, in Camelot Series; Dramatic Essays, selected and edited by W. Archer and R. W. Lowe (Scott); Lectures on the English Comic Writers, in Temple Classics (Dent); Characters of Shakespeare's Plays, in Bohn's Standard Library; Selections from complete works, with introduction by A. Ireland, in Cavendish Library (Warne).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by A. Birrell (English Men of Letters, in preparation). Essays, by L. Stephen, in Hours in a Library; by G. E. Saintsbury, in Essays in English Literature, 1780–1860; by L. I. Guiney, in A Little English Gallery; by T. De Quincey, in Essays on the Poets and Other English Writers.

CHARLES LAMB. *Texts.*—Poems, Plays, and Miscellaneous Essays, ed. A. Ainger (Macmillan); Essays of Elia, in Camelot Classics; Dramatic Essays, with introduction by Brander Matthews (Dodd, Mead); Specimens of English Dramatic Poets, in Bohn's Antiquarian Library; Tales from Shakespeare, Riverside Library (Houghton, Mifflin).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by A. Ainger (English Men of Letters). Essays, by T. De Quincey, in Biographical Essays; by G. E. Woodberry, in Makers of Literature; by W. Pater, in Appreciations; "Lamb and Wither," in A. C. Swinburne's Miscellanies; "Lamb and Keats," in F. Harrison's Ruskin, Mill, and other Literary Estimates.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY. *Texts.*—Complete Works, ed. D. Masson (Edinburgh, 1889); Confessions of an English Opium Eater, in Temple Classics (Dent); Joan of Arc and English Mail Coach, ed. J. M. Hart (Holt); Revolt of a Tartar Tribe, ed. C. E. Baldwin (Longmans); Selections, ed. Bliss Perry (Doubleday & Page).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by D. Masson (English Men of Letters). Essays, by G. E. Saintsbury, in Essays in English Literature, 1780–1860, 1st series; by D. Masson, in Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, and other Essays; by L. Stephen, in Hours in a Library.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR. *Texts.*—Complete Works, ed. C. G. Crump (London, 1891); Imaginary Conversations, selected by H. Ellis, in Camelot Series; Pericles and Aspasia, ed. H. Ellis, in Camelot Series; Select Poems in Canterbury Poets.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by S. Colvin (English Men of Letters). Essays, by E. Dowden, in Studies in Literature, 1789–

1877; by G. E. Woodberry, in Makers of Literature; by L. Stephen, in Hours in a Library; by G. E. Saintsbury, in Studies in English Literature, 1780–1860, 2d series; by A. C. Swinburne, in Miscellanies. See also E. C. Stedman's Victorian Poets.

THOMAS HOOD. *Texts.*—Choice Works, in prose and verse (Chatto Windus); Selected Poems, with selected poems of Leigh Hunt, in Canterbury Poets.

Criticism.—Essay, by G. E. Saintsbury, in Essays in English Literature, 1780–1860, 2d series; "Hood and Mrs. Browning," in W. J. Dawson's Makers of Modern English. See also E. C. Stedman's Victorian Poets.

CHAPTER XIV.: THE VICTORIAN ERA

General Works.—A History of Our Own Times, by J. M'Carthy; Nineteenth Century Literature, by G. E. Saintsbury; Victorian Poets, by E. C. Stedman; An Anthology of Victorian Poetry, by E. C. Stedman; A Literary History of England in the Nineteenth Century, by Mrs. Oliphant; English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century, by H. A. Beers. "Victorian Literature," in E. Dowden's Transcripts and Studies, gives an interesting bird's-eye view.

THOMAS BABINGTON, LORD MACAULAY. *Texts.*—Essays and Lays of Ancient Rome, 27 essays in one volume (Longmans, 1896); Essays on Addison and Milton, in Longman's English Classics; Essays on Johnson, in Longman's English Classics.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by J. A. C. Morison (English Men of Letters); Life, by G. O. Trevelyan. Essays, by L. Stephen, in Hours in a Library; by W. Bagehot, in Literary Studies; by F. Harrison, in Studies in Early Victorian Literature; by G. E. Saintsbury, in Corrected Impressions.

THOMAS CARLYLE. *Texts.*—Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, 1 vol. (Appleton, 1874); French Revolution, 3 vols. (Scribner, 1896); Life of Sterling (Scribner, 1897); Heroes, in Athenæum Press Series; Past and Present, Chartism, and Sartor Resartus, 1 vol. (Harper); Essay on Burns, in Longman's English Classics, and various other school editions.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by R. Garnett (Great Writers); Life, by J. Nichol (English Men of Letters). Essays, by J. R. Lowell, in My Study Windows; by R. H. Hutton, in Modern Guides of English Thought; by F. Harrison, in Studies in Early Victorian Literature; by J. M. Robertson, in Modern Humanists; by W. C. Brownell, in Victorian Prose Masters; by W. S.

Hilly, in Four English Humorists of the Nineteenth Century; "Dr. Johnson and Carlyle," in J. Burroughs's Indoor Studies.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON. *Texts.*—Works, Globe edition; Works, Cambridge edition; Select Poems, ed. W. J. Rolfe (Houghton, Mifflin); numerous school editions of The Princess, In Memoriam, etc.

Biography and Criticism.—Life and Letters, by Hallam Tennyson (Macmillan); Life, by R. F. Horton (Dent); Life, by A. Waugh (U. S. Book Co.). The Poetry of Tennyson, by Henry van Dyke (Scribner); Tennyson, his Art and his Relation to Modern Life, by Stopford Brooke; Tennyson as a Religious Teacher, by C. F. G. Masterman; A Primer of Tennyson, by W. M. Dixon (Methuen). Essays, by E. Dowden, in Studies in Literature, 1789–1877; by R. H. Hutton, in Literary Essays; by L. E. Gates, in Studies and Appreciations; by F. Harrison, in Ruskin, Mill, and other Literary Estimates. See also E. C. Stedman's Victorian Poets; H. B. Forman's Our Living Poets; J. Forster's Great Teachers; F. W. H. Myers's Science and a Future Life.

ROBERT BROWNING. *Texts.*—Political Works, complete in 1 vol., Cambridge edition (Houghton, Mifflin); Poetical Works, 2 vols. (Macmillan, 1896); Select Poems (Harper); Principal Shorter Poems (Appleton).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by W. Sharp (Great Writers); Life, by A. Waugh, Westminster Biographies (Small Maynard); An Introduction to the Study of Browning, by A. Symons (Cassell); same, by H. Corson (Heath); Handbook to Works of Browning, by Mrs. Sutherland Orr (Bell). Essays, by R. H. Hutton, in Literary Essays, and in Essays Theological and Literary; by E. Dowden, in Studies in Literature, 1789–1877; by J. Jacobs, in Literary Studies; by J. J. Chapman, in Emerson and Other Essays; by E. C. Stedman, in Victorian Poets. See also Browning's Criticism of Life, by W. F. Revell (Sonnenschein); Browning's Message to His Time, by E. Berdoe (Sonnenschein); Personalia, by E. Gosse (Houghton, Mifflin); Great Teachers, by J. Forster; Poets and Problems, by G. W. Cooke.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING. *Texts.*—Poetical Works, 1 vol. (Macmillan); Poetical Works, 1 vol., Cambridge edition.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by J. H. Ingram; Essays, by E. C. Stedman, in Victorian Poets; by A. C. Benson, in his Essays; by G. B. Smith, in Poets and Novelists; by Sarrazin, in Poètes Modernes de l'Angleterre (Paris); by J. Texte, in Études de littérature européenne (Paris, 1898).

MATTHEW ARNOLD.—Poetical Works, complete in 1 vol. (Macmillan);

Selected Poems, in Golden Treasury Series; Selections from Prose Writings, with introductory essay, by L. E. Gates (Holt).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by H. W. Paul (English Men of Letters, in preparation); Life, by G. E. Saintsbury (Blackwood). Essays, by R. H. Hutton, in Literary Essays (Arnold's poetry); by L. E. Gates, in Three Studies in Literature (also prefixed to prose selections, above); by L. E. Gates, in Studies and Appreciations (The Return to Conventional Life); by R. H. Hutton, in Modern Guides of English Thought; by W. C. Brownell, in Victorian Prose Masters; by G. E. Woodberry, in Makers of Literature; by F. Harrison, in Ruskin, Mill, and other Literary Estimates; by J. M. Robertson, in Modern Humanists; by J. Jacobs, in Literary Studies; by W. H. Hudson, in Studies in Interpretation; by J. Burroughs, in Indoor Studies.

JOHN RUSKIN. *Texts.*—No good cheap edition of Ruskin exists; the standard edition is the Brantwood, ed. C. E. Norton. Essays and Letters, selected by L. G. Hufford (Ginn); A Ruskin Anthology, by W. S. Kennedy (New York, 1886); An Introduction to the Writings of Ruskin (selections), by V. D. Scudder (Heath); Wild Olive and Munera Pulveris, 1 vol. (U. S. Book Co.); Wild Olive and Sesame and Lilies, 1 vol. (Burt).

Biography and Criticism.—John Ruskin; by Mrs. Meynell (Dodd, Mead); Life, by W. G. Collingwood (Houghton, Mifflin); The Work of John Ruskin, by C. Waldstein (Harper); John Ruskin, Social Reformer, by J. A. Hobson (Estes). Essays, by W. C. Brownell, in Victorian Prose Masters; by J. M. Robertson, in Modern Humanists; by F. Harrison, in Ruskin, Mill, and other Literary Estimates; by G. E. Saintsbury, in Corrected Impressions; by J. Forster, in Great Teachers; by W. J. Stillman, in The Old Rome and the New, and Other Essays.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN. Apologia pro Vita Sua, and Idea of a University (Longmans); Selections, with introductory essay, by L. E. Gates (Holt).

Biography and Criticism.—Cardinal Newman, by R. H. Hutton (Houghton, Mifflin); Cardinal Newman, the Story of his Life, by J. H. Jennings; Newman, sa Vie et ses Œuvres, by L. F. Faure (Paris, 1901); The Oxford Movement, 1833–1845, by R. W. Church (London, 1891). Essays, by R. H. Hutton, in Modern Guides of English Thought; by R. W. Church, in Occasional Papers, Vol. II. (six papers on Newman); by A. B. Donaldson, in Five Great Oxford Leaders (London, 1900); by L. E. Gates (Newman as a prose writer), in Three Studies in Literature (also prefixed to selections, above); by W. S. Lilly, in Essays and Speeches; by J. Jacobs, in Literary Studies.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.—Poetical Works, 2 vols., ed. W. M. Rossetti (London, 1901). Life, by J. Knight (Great Writers). Essays, by A. C. Swinburne, in Miscellanies; by H. B. Forman, in Our Living Poets; by Sarrazin, in Poètes Modernes de l'Angleterre (Hachette).

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.—Poems, 2 vols. (Macmillan). Essays, by A. Symons, in Studies in Two Literatures; by A. C. Benson, in his Essays; by H. B. Forman, in Our Living Poets.

WILLIAM MORRIS. *Texts.*—The Defense of Guenevere (Ellis White); The Early Paradise, 1 vol. (Longmans, 1896); Sigurd the Volsung; Story of the Glittering Plain and The House of the Wolfings (Rèeves and Turner); The Story of the Volsungs (Camelot Series); Chief socialistic writings in William Morris, Poet, Artist, and Socialist (Humboldt Publishing Co.).

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by J. W. Mackail, 2 vols. (Longmans); Wm. Morris, his Art, Writings, and Public Life, by A. Valance (Bell). Essays, by H. B. Forman, in Our Living Poets; by W. J. Dawson, in Makers of Modern English; by A. Symons, in Studies in Two Literatures; by G. E. Saintsbury, in Corrected Impressions. See also The Influence of Old Norse Literature upon English Literature, by C. H. Nordby (Macmillan).

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE. *Texts.*—Complete Works (Chatto and Windus); Poems and Ballads, with Atalanta in Calydon and Erechtheus, 1 vol. (Lovell); Select Poems (Rivington).

Biography and Criticism.—A. C. Swinburne, A Study, by T. Wratislaw. Essays, by H. B. Forman, in Our Living Poets; by J. R. Lowell (Swinburne's Tragedies), in My Study Windows; by G. E. Saintsbury, in Corrected Impressions; by Sarrazin, Poètes Modernes de l'Angleterre (Hachette).

CHAPTERS XI. AND XV.: THE NOVEL

General Works.—The English Novel, to Waverley (Scribner), by W. A. Raleigh; The Development of the English Novel, by W. L. Cross (Macmillan); The Evolution of the English Novel, by F. H. Stoddard (Macmillan); A History of the Novel previous to the Seventeenth Century, by F. M. Warren (Holt); The English Novel, by S. Lanier (Scribner); An Introduction to the Study of English Fiction, by W. E. Simonds (Heath); British Novelists and their Styles, by D. Masson (Small, 1889); The English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare, by J. J. Jusserand (Unwin); History of Prose Fiction, revised and edited by H. Wilson, by J. C. Dunlop (Bohn's Standard Library).

DANIEL DEFOE. *Texts.*—Novels, ed. Aitken (Dent); Early Writings

in Carisbrooke Library (Routledge); Poems and Pamphlets, in Arber's English Garner, Vol. VIII.

Biography and Criticism.—Life, by W. Minto (English Men of Letters); Life, by W. Whitten, Westminster Biographies (Small Maynard). Essay, by L. Stephen, Hours in a Library.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON.—Works (Lippincott). Life, by C. L. Thomson (Marshall). Essays, by L. Stephen, Hours in a Library; by H. D. Traill, The New Fiction and Other Essays; by A. Dobson, Eighteenth Century Vignettes.

HENRY FIELDING.—Works, ed. G. E. Saintsbury (Dent); Voyage to Lisbon, in Cassell's National Library. Life, by A. Dobson (English Men of Letters). Essays, by W. M. Thackeray, in English Humorists; by L. Stephen, in Hours in a Library; by A. Dobson, in Eighteenth Century Vignettes (Fielding's Voyage to Lisbon and Fielding's Library); by J. R. Lowell, in Democracy and Other Addresses; by G. B. Smith, in Poets and Novelists.

TOBIAS GEORGE SMOLLETT.—Works, ed. Henley (Scribner). Life, by D. Hannah (Great Writers); Life, by O. Smeaton, Famous Scots Series (Scribner); Thackeray's English Humorists, "Hogarth, Smollett and Fielding."

LAURENCE STERNE.—Works, ed. G. E. Saintsbury (Dent); Tristram Shandy, in Morley's Universal Library and in the Temple Classics. Life, by H. D. Traill (English Men of Letters); Life, by P. Fitzgerald, 2 vols. (Chapman and Hall). Essays, by W. M. Thackeray, in English Humorists; by W. Bagehot, in Literary Studies ("Sterne and Thackeray").

HENRY MACKENZIE.—The Man of Feeling (Dent, 1893), also in Cassell's National Library; Miscellaneous Works (Man of Feeling and Various Essays) (Harper). See Mrs. Oliphant's Literary History of England, Vol. I.

FRANCES BURNEY, MADAME D'ARBLAY.—Diary and Letters, ed. S. C. Woolsey; Fanny Burney and her Friends (selections from her diary, etc.), ed. L. B. Seeley (London, 1890). Essay by T. B. Macaulay.

HORACE WALPOLE.—The Castle of Otranto, in Cassell's National Library; Letters, selected and edited by C. D. Yonge (Nimmo). See H. A. Beers's English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century, and E. Gosse's Life of Gray. Essay, in L. Stephen's Hours in a Library.

WILLIAM BECKFORD.—Vathek, in Cassell's National Library.

MATTHEW GREGORY LEWIS.—The Bravo of Venice, in Cassell's National Library; Tales of Terror and Wonder, in Morley's Universal Library; Selections in Saintsbury's Tales of Mystery, Vol. I. (London, 1891).

MRS. RADCLIFFE.—See Saintsbury's Tales of Mystery, Vol. I.

WILLIAM GODWIN.—Caleb Williams (Routledge, 1853). Essays, by De Quincey, in Essays on the Poets and other Writers; by L. Stephen, Hours in a Library ("Godwin and Shelley"); by W. Hazlitt, in The Spirit of the Age. Wm. Godwin: his Friends and Contemporaries, 2 vols. (Roberts).

MARIA EDGEWORTH.—Novels (Dent, 1893); Castle Rackrent and The Absentee, in Morley's Universal Library. Life and Letters, by A. J. C. Hare, 2 vols. (Arnold); Maria Edgeworth, by Helen Zimmerman (Roberts). Essay, in Mrs. Ritchie's A Book of Sibyls (Smith Elder).

JANE AUSTEN.—Works, ed. R. B. Johnson (Dent); Letters, selected and edited by S. C. Woolsey (Roberts). Life, by Goldwin Smith (Scott); Life, by O. F. Adams (Lee and Shepard); Jane Austen, by W. P. Pollock (Longmans); Jane Austen's Novels, by G. Pellew (Boston, 1883); Essays on the Novel, as illustrated by Scott and Miss Austen, by A. A. Jack (Macmillan). Essay, in Mrs. Ritchie's A Book of Sibyls.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.—Life, by R. H. Hutton (English Men of Letters); Life, by C. D. Yonge (Great Writers); Life, by W. H. Hudson (London, 1901); Life, by G. E. Saintsbury (Scribner); Life, by J. G. Lockhart, 7 vols. (Black). L. Maigron: Le Roman Historique a l'Epoque Romantique; Essai sur l'influence de Walter Scott (Paris, 1898). Essays, by A. C. Swinburne, in Studies in Prose and Poetry, "The Journal of Sir Walter Scott"; by W. Bagehot, in Literary Studies; "The Waverley Novels"; by L. Stephen, in Hours in a Library; by J. C. Shairp, in Aspects of Poetry; by T. Carlyle, in his Essays; by G. E. Saintsbury, in Essays in English Literature, 1780–1860, 2d series, "Scott and Dumas"; by W. Hazlitt, in The Spirit of the Age.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI, EARL OF BEACONSFIELD.—Novels and Tales (Longmans) Lord Beaconsfield; A Study, by George Brandes; The Earl of Beaconsfield, by H. E. Gorst, Victorian Era Series (Blackie). Essays, by L. Stephen, in Hours in a Library; F. Harrison, in Early Victorian Literature.

EDWARD BULWER, LORD LYTTON.—Novels, Knebsworth ed. (Routledge); Dramatic Works (Routledge). Essay, by W. W. Senior, Essays in Fiction (Longmans).

CHARLES DICKENS —Life, by J. Forster, 2 vols. (Chapman and Hall); Life, by F. T. Marzials (Great Writers); Life, by A. W. Ward (English Men of Letters); Charles Dickens, A Critical Study, by G. R. Gissing (Dodd, Mead). Essays, by F. Harrison, in Early Victorian Literature; by W. Bagehot, in Literary Studies, Vol. II.; by W. S. Lilly, in Four English Humorists of the Nineteenth

Century; by A. Lang, essay prefixed to Gadshill edition of Dickens (Chapman and Hall).

WM. MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.—Life, by A. Trollope (English Men of Letters); Life, by Merivale and Marzials (Great Writers); Life, by L. Melville, 2 vols. (Stone). Essays, by F. Harrison, in Studies in Early Victorian Literature; by W. C. Brownell, in Victorian Prose Masters; by W. S. Lilly, in Four English Humorists of the Nineteenth Century; by G. B. Smith, in Poets and Novelists.

ANTHONY TROLLOPE.—Autobiography, ed. H. M. Trollope (Harper). Essays, by H. James, in Partial Portraits; by F. Harrison, in Early Victorian Literature.

CHARLES READE.—Charles Reade: a memoir compiled chiefly from his literary remains, by C. L. and C. Reade (Chapman Hall, 1887). Essay, in Swinburne's Miscellanies.

CHARLOTTE AND EMILY BRONTË.—Works of Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë (Dent, 1893); Haworth edition, ed. Mrs. H. Ward (Scribner). Life of Charlotte Brontë, by A. Birrell (Great Writers); Life of Charlotte Brontë, by Mrs. Gaskell (Appleton); Life of Emily Brontë, by A. M. F. Robinson (Roberts). A Note on Charlotte Brontë, by A. C. Swinburne (Chatto and Windus); Essays: Charlotte Brontë, by L. E. Gates, in Studies and Appreciations; The Brontë Sisters, in Views on Vexed Questions, W. W. Kinsley; Emily Brontë, in Swinburne's Miscellanies; Charlotte Brontë, in F. Harrison's Early Victorian Literature; "The Brontës," in G. B. Smith, Poets and Novelists; C. Brontë, in E. Montégus's Ecrivains Modernes de l'Angleterre (Hachette).

CHARLES KINGSLEY.—Life, by M. Kaufmann (Methuen); Charles Kingsley: his letters, and memories of his life, by his wife (Macmillan, 1890). Essays, by F. Harrison, in Early Victorian Literature; by L. Stephen, in Hours in a Library. See also passage on Kingsley in the essay "Victorian Literature," in E. Dowden's Transcripts and Studies.

MRS. GASKELL.—E. Montégus's Ecrivains Modernes de l'Angleterre (Hachette). See also Saintsbury's Nineteenth Century Literature, and the Dictionary of National Biography. Critical paper on Mrs. Gaskell's writings by Prof. W. Minto, in Fortnightly Review, Vol. XXIV., July-September, 1878.

GEORGE ELIOT.—Life, by L. Stephen (English Men of Letters, in preparation); Life, by O. Browning (Great Writers); Life, 3 vols., by Cross; George Eliot: A Critical Study of Her Life and Writings, by G. W. Cooke (Osgood). Essays, by R. H. Hutton, in Modern Guides of English Thought, and in Essays Theological and Literary; by F. Harrison, in Studies in Early Victorian Lit-

erature; by H. James, in Partial Portraits; by W. C. Brownell, in Victorian Prose Masters; by J. Jacobs, in Literary Studies; by W. S. Lilly, in Four English Humorists of the Nineteenth Century; by A. Vincens, Portraits de Femmes (Paris, 1887); by F. Brunetière, Le Roman Naturaliste (Paris, 1883).

GEORGE MEREDITH.—Novels (Scribner); Poems, selected (Scribner); Essay on Comedy. George Meredith; some characteristics, R. Le Gallienne (Lane); George Meredith; A study; Hannah Lynch (Methuen). Essay, by W. C. Brownell, in Victorian Prose Masters; by A. Monkhouse, in Books and Plays.

THOMAS HARDY.—Works (Harper). The Art of Thomas Hardy, by L. Johnson (Lane); Thomas Hardy, by Annie Macdonnell (Hodder and Stoughton, 1894). Essay, by T. G. Selby, in The Theology of Modern Fiction.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.—Works (Scribner). Letters, ed. S. Colvin (Scribner); Life, by G. Balfour (Scribner); Life, by Margaret N. Black (Scribner); Robert Louis Stevenson, a Study, by A[lice] B[rown] (Copeland and Day). Essay, by H. James, in Partial Portraits; by J. J. Chapman, in Emerson and Other Essays; by A. Monkhouse, in Books and Plays, "Plays of Stevenson and Henley."

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